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ABSTRACT

Recommendations which emerged from the Second and Third National Conferences on Rural America are presented in this revised platform of principles and policy recommendations for rural America. Major goal of the document is to find practical solutions to problems facing rural people so that strategies of rural revitalization and action can be pursued, while at the same time maintaining a strong system of family owned and operated farms (enabling young farmers to obtain land and equipment, develop alternative farming and marketing systems to reduce dependence on petrochemicals, improve farm income, and benefit consumers). Revisions of these major areas covered in the original 1975 platform are presented with a brief statement of the problem and recommendations for solutions: Self-Government in Rural America; Rural Poverty, Welfare, and Income Maintenance; Land, Resources, and People; Agricultural Production; Employment, Jobs, and Training; Rural Housing and Community Development; Rural Health and Medical Care; Education in Rural America; Energy and Rural People; Rural Economic Development; Rural Public Transportation; and Rural Justice and Legal Assistance. In addition, the document includes new statements and recommendations on Hired Farmworkers, The Rural Aging, and Rural Women. (RS)

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PLATFORM FOR RURAL AMERICA

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PLATFORM FOR RURAL AMERICA

PLATFORM FOR RURAL AMERICA

*Revised at the Third National Conference
on Rural America December 5-7, 1977*

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METROPOLLYANNA is the belief, usually tacit, that sooner or later all of the people will move to the big city and live happily ever after.

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RURAL AMERICA

1346 Connecticut Avenue NW Washington DC 20036



Clay Cochran

Roger Bloubaum

foreword

THE ORIGINAL PLATFORM FOR RURAL AMERICA was a product of the First National Conference on Rural America in April 1975. This revised edition reflects the findings and recommendations which emerged from the Second and Third National Conferences on Rural America, the latter held in December 1977. The Platform has been adopted by both the Board and membership of RURAL AMERICA, and therefore represents our official statement of principles and policy recommendations.

This document outlines a program of action for concerned citizens. Each section contains a brief statement about a problem, and proposes several ways of solving that problem. We have tried to keep it short enough to be useful.

Literally hundreds of people have contributed directly to this platform. We welcome corrections of any errors it may contain, along with constructive criticism of the proposed solutions. It is intended to be a living document—to be modified by the members of RURAL AMERICA from time to time to reflect changing conditions and needs.

Clay L. Cochran

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introduction

In April 1975, when the call went out for the First National Conference on Rural America, the main theme was official neglect and discrimination against rural citizens. Nearly three years later, it is still easy to find evidence that rural people, simply because they live in rural areas, are denied their fair share of Federal assistance and of opportunities for full and productive lives.

However, since the First Conference, a number of bright spots have appeared. Throughout the country, there is evidence that the problems of the people in small towns and rural areas are being treated with more respect and concern.

And yet, while the signs of an awakening fill us with hope, much work needs to be done. As a nation, we must determine how to effectively conserve and justly share our land, water and other natural resources . . . we must give special attention to ways of conserving and developing new sources of energy in rural areas and for the entire nation . . . we must maintain a strong system of family owned and operated farms, enabling young farmers to obtain land and equipment, and develop alternative systems of farming and marketing that will reduce our dependence on the the petrochemical industry, improve farm income, and benefit the consumer. Solutions must also be found for the special problems of the rural poor, native Americans and other rural minorities, farmworkers, and the rural elderly. In addition, we need to focus on the contributions and needs of rural women in our society, and to perfect our skills in organizing rural groups so that their voices can be clearly heard.

The goal of this document as well as those who have contributed to it is to take advantage of the groundwork that has already been laid, and to push on towards finding practical solutions to the problems facing rural people. Where once we made the case for a largely invisible rural population, now we make plans for a rural revitalization. Where once we simply sought a voice for rural America, we now seek to strengthen that voice and pursue strategies of rural action.

Success will depend upon the joint efforts and contributions of many people—concerned and active people who share a common sense of the richness, vitality, and diversity of rural America; people who recognize the economic and social needs of rural America; and people who have come to the belief that, collectively, we can significantly improve the lives of rural Americans and all citizens.

general resolutions

- 1. RURAL AMERICA** calls upon Congress to establish a Select Committee on Rural America, patterned after the Temporary National Economic Committee, to study and report on conditions in rural America.
- 2. RURAL AMERICA** calls upon the Department of Agriculture to take a vigorous leadership role in carrying out Federal rural development policies which are sensitive to the needs and wishes of small family farmers and non-farming rural people. If the Department of Agriculture cannot or will not pursue such a course, then there should be created a Department of Rural Affairs to administer these programs essential to the welfare of rural people. This new department should include rural development, housing, community facilities, education, health . . . , and all related functions of the Extension Service.
- 3. RURAL AMERICA** calls upon President Jimmy Carter and his Administration to consult with rural groups and individuals when developing policy affecting rural people. For decades the overwhelming weight of Federal assistance has been urban oriented. This has been a serious obstacle to improving rural conditions and we call upon the President to make a concerted effort to institute programs which will improve the quality of life for rural people.
- 4. RURAL AMERICA** calls upon the major private foundations, spending quasi-public funds, to show more concern for the problems of rural people. Their gifts are more inequitably distributed than public funds. If the private foundations cannot be persuaded to drop their parochial view of American life, the Congress should take action.

Humberto Fuentes

Kim Herman Rudy Arrendondo



SECTION 1

self-government in rural america

"Self-government is always better than good government."

HAROLD LASKI

There is a well established and widely held belief that the closer a governmental unit is to the voting population, the more control the voters exercise over its policies and actions.

This is a myth in many rural areas. Democracy or self-government is not a state of being. Rather it is a continuing process, achieved by perseverance based on a sense of personal independence and self-reliance. The task of keeping government the servant of the people is as arduous as it is everlasting, whether the government is local or Federal.

For people living in small towns and rural areas, failure or inability to participate in local government has contributed to their endurance of nearly half the poverty in America and continued suffering from inequities in almost every Federal program. Meaningful self-government includes gaining the power and control necessary to overcome these inequities.

In the face of overwhelming absentee-owned economic power, the effectiveness of self-government is limited. Too frequently, in our quasi-colonial areas, local governments consist of officials who represent the absentee owners, not the people of the community. A West Virginia town government made up of lawyers representing timber or coal mining corporations is a "colonial" government. A town planning commission is not representative if it is comprised of second-home owners with a vested interest in a corporate-owned ski complex located in that community.

Just as the people must be organized for more effective participation in the affairs of their own community, so must the government be organized to deliver the services and meet the needs of its residents. Many local governments in rural areas suffer from inadequate revenues and unprofessional administration. Community organization and citizen participation cannot be productive if individual local governments lack the resources and technical assistance necessary to perform some of the functions demanded of them. In 1967, there were 81,248 local governmental bodies in America with 62% of all municipalities serving fewer than 1,000 people. This is not to say that small is not beautiful. Rather it is to say that effective sub-state planning could help these small communities meet some of their needs.

Presently sub-state planning and development districts are not responsive to the needs of the people they are supposed to serve. Multi-county organizations should be a means for local communities to get professional help in applying for State and Federal money, but many planning and development districts overlap and compete for the few resources available. Without effective Federal coordination, these agencies may work at cross purposes. Presently, there are over 4,000 sub-state planning and development organizations in the country. If these districts are not subject to control by elected officials and community residents, they will only undermine and obstruct self-government.

recommendations

- 1. *Citizen Participation:*** There must be more participation in the decision-making process by those whom the decisions affect. Under-represented groups including women, youth, minorities and low income people must have a greater voice in the political process. Participation in the electoral process is the right and responsibility of every citizen. His or her knowledge and advice is also needed in planning and decision-making. Elected officials at every level of government must give increased attention to improving communications between themselves and their constituents, and Congress must put a premium on such performance.
- 2. *Community Organization:*** Local residents must mobilize around specific problems, e.g. land-use, property taxes, or utility costs. There are many ways to organize community residents around these issues including public hearings, town meetings, the formation of co-ops, CDC's or other kinds of non-profit organizations. Government activities and legislative action must be out in the open.
- 3. *Local Control:*** Sub-state planning agencies and development districts must be under the control of locally elected officials who are representative of and accountable to local residents. Control of economic power and natural resources must be returned to the people to ensure participation in the political process.
- 4. *Revenue Sharing:*** Legislation must stipulate public hearings on the use of revenue sharing monies at the local level. Federal money must be made available for citizen planning efforts and for more thorough reports and informative material on programs.
- 5. *Small Community Administration:*** A Small Community Administration, an independent Federal agency, should be created through which small towns and other rural governments and non-profit organizations or co-ops functioning in the public interest can obtain assistance in securing Federal funds. Because small towns tend to lack technical expertise, a Small Community Administration could become a vital liaison between Federal agencies, the Congress and local rural government.
- 6. *Regionalism:*** In areas like Central Appalachia where a single industry controls economic activity, people suffer significantly at the hands of profit making absentee corporations. Citizens are effectively locked out of the decision-making process and their government often does not function on their behalf. Non-profit community organizations working for the public good, must be recognized as legitimate bodies to negotiate with county, state, regional and national governments.

SECTION 2

rural poverty, welfare and income maintenance

"In a nation in which the wealthiest 1% possess more than eight times the wealth of the bottom 50%, in which the percentage of the national income going to the lower fifth of the population has remained the same for 45 years, in which 40 million people remain poor or near poor, more than a food stamp, UIC, or child feeding program is at issue . . ."

REPORT OF SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND HUMAN NEEDS, June, 1974.

Poverty in rural America remains pervasive and persistent. The studies, exposes, public promises, and Great Society Programs have left unsolved the problems of many low-income rural people.

In 1975, 41 percent of the Nation's poor lived in nonmetro areas, a share far greater than the nonmetro share (32 percent) of the total population.

Poverty was substantially more prevalent among the minority population than among the total population, and greatest of all among minorities living in the most rural nonfarm counties. A 1970 study showed that 60 percent of minority people living in "totally rural counties" had incomes below the poverty level.

Federal programs designed to alleviate poverty have failed to recognize the disproportionate needs of rural people. For example, less than a third of the food stamp bonuses go to people living in rural areas, only 26 percent of the Medicaid outlays, and only 23 percent of the Community Action Agency funds. On a per capita basis, rural people are entitled to twice the CAP funds they receive.

The Food Stamp revisions embodied in the 1977 Farm Bill represent an attempt to streamline certification and processing, but the efficacy of these changes remains to be seen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *We urge a recommitment* of national concern and resources to the elimination of poverty. This requires, primarily, an acknowledgement that our economic system produces poverty, and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the system to pay for the redress of that injustice.
2. *Full Employment:* There is obviously no single means by which the suffering and degradation of poverty can be eliminated. From "thirty dollars every Thursday" to the "negative income tax," the simplistic approaches turn out to be traps by which people's attention is diverted from evolutionary improvement.

(a) The most effective means by which poverty can be reduced and welfare rolls cut is for the Federal government to undertake—in good faith—a program for maintaining full employment, so that every adult person who is able and willing to work can find a job which pays enough to enable him or her to live without charity. The best strategy for achieving this long-evaded responsibility is to combine the unemployment compensation insurance program with a public employment program so that the community will have to foot the bill, one way or another.

(b) We cannot have full employment unless we also provide an adequate child care program for the children of working parents; convenient and affordable public transportation to and from the job; and relevant job training.

(c) A government employment service which does more than register farm labor contractors, channel farmworkers to agribusiness and issue unemployment checks is necessary. We have never had a real public employment service, and it is essential that we get about the task, beginning with the Federalization of the existing apparatus.

3. *Welfare Reform:*

(a) Cash Assistance: Any reform of the present welfare system should meet the following criteria:

- Equality of federal payment among the states.
- Income benefit should be adequate and periodically adjusted for cost-of-living increases.
- Any welfare reform proposals must establish eligibility based on current need, rejecting the concept of six-months prior budgeting.
- The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) should be available to all low income working people, including those working in public service employment jobs.
- Any reform should provide all with the same benefits, regardless of marital status.

(b) Jobs:

- We recommend that any and all jobs created as part of a federal welfare package mandate prevailing wages and that those jobs *at least* take families and individuals out of poverty.
- Priority should be given to jobs for human services.
- The Federal government should establish criteria and job priorities for local prime sponsors. The decisions made by local prime sponsors should be subject to Federal review. The priorities should include:
 - a. A special priority for the creation of CETA human service jobs currently required by legislative intent, i.e. winterization.
 - b. As an adjunct to the jobs and income program, we recommend that the federal government allocate monies for social services, specifically outreach, nutrition, education and budget counseling, targeting these monies to serve rural communities equitably.
- We oppose any public service employment provision that calls for the periodic firing of public service workers to undertake a forced job search, especially in those areas where little or no private sector employment opportunities are available to welfare recipients. This would not act as an incentive but rather as a useless, if not cruel requirement.
- The Carter job and income proposals intend to force single parents out into the job market when their children are between the ages of 6-13. We urge that this proposal be dropped and that housework and the raising of children be defined as work that both male and female do and as a legitimate job to be supported in our economy.

4. *Welfare Rights:* We must provide a guaranteed income to all those who cannot work, in an amount and form which enables them to live in health and dignity.

The rights of citizens to Federal welfare should be a national right and not subject to veto or evasion by state or local governments. With the exception of social security, all of the major income maintenance programs are dependent on state cooperation and financial contributions. The limited revenue raising ability of the poorer states, which tend to be

rural, is the primary reason these programs discriminate against the rural poor.

For example, in 1975, figures on average monthly AFDC payments ranged from \$14 per recipient and \$49 per family in Mississippi to \$107 per person and \$357 per family in New York.

5. Food Stamps: We must extend food stamp and other nutrition program benefits and improve outreach. Rural people have special problems in utilizing the food stamp program; they often have many miles to travel to be certified, receive stamps, purchase food. They need help with transportation; simplified certification and stamp delivery systems; access to a wider variety of food markets including food buying clubs and cooperative stores. Seasonally employed rural people need a flexible system under which they can be certified for a year on the basis of their average yearly income, with the right to vary the size of their monthly stamp purchase.

The Welfare Reform Package should maintain eligibility to employed heads of household or spouses at least at the present Food Stamp eligibility levels.

6. Social Security and Supplementary Security Income:

(a) Income guarantees under SS and SSI must be raised to provide a level of income which at least meets the government's own poverty definition. For many older rural people Social Security income is their only income. They have been bypassed by private pension plans promoted by private industry and unionized workers and found predominantly in urban areas.

(b) The asset test for SSI, (currently \$1500) must be substantially raised or eliminated. Rural poor people more often have and need assets in excess of that amount to survive. Until SSI benefits are high enough to meet all contingencies, people should not have to strip themselves of all meaningful savings to qualify.

(c) SSI should provide payments for dependent family members, i.e., children of disabled persons and spouses who are needed at home.

(d) SSI age requirements should be lowered to 62 to recognize the onset of financial problems associated with old age.

(e) Cost of living increases in SS and SSI should not result in decreases in other benefits such as veterans' pensions.

(f) Individuals should have a right to speedy determination of eligibility for SS and SSI and when denied eligibility should be adequately informed of their right to appeal such determination. Access to the appeal process should be simple enough and accessible enough not to require the assistance of counsel. Where counsel is necessary, it should be provided by the government at government expense.

(g) Stricter procedures should be established to protect agricultural workers from having Social Security contributions deducted by crew leaders and farm employers and not paid and reported. Because of widespread abuses of this nature in the past all farmworkers who retire should be declared eligible for benefits upon a reasonable showing that they were employed for the minimum number of required quarters.

(h) The economic contribution made by women in farm families should provide the basis for social security earnings for farm women.

7. General Assistance: Until a guaranteed income is assured, the Federal government should initiate a Federal general assistance program for all persons whose needs are not met by other programs. General assistance varies from state to state and those states which exercise little or no responsibility for general assistance tend to have a low per capita income and tend to be rural.

Aaron Henry

8. Poverty Level Index: The present poverty level index which measures "emergency and temporary" conditions is a cruel farce and should be abandoned in favor of a civilized definition.

9. Community Services Administration: We advocate the renewal of the mandate to the Community Services Administration to support the interests of poor people at every level of government and in every agency. CSA must take appropriate steps to insure equity to the rural poor, including those who live in counties not currently served. There are 900 such counties—most of them rural.

The role of community-based non-profit private organizations in the delivery of services and in advocacy should be defined to guarantee that the services in rural areas reach low income people. Some form of "flexible" (seed and incentive) funds should be made available to organizations which fulfill their rules in advocacy and service delivery. Furthermore, they should be given legal standing to represent the rights of individual poor people and poor rural and small town communities.

10. Department of Health, Education and Welfare: It is essential that the Department of HEW be structured to permit increased representation and input from rural people and their organizations. Rural Americans need access to the policy-making bodies of the Department in order to ensure that certain policies and programs are responsive to their needs.

(a) The existing Rural Health Coordination Committee should be continued and similar staff level rural coordinating committees should be established in both the Offices of Education and Public Assistance.

(b) The Office of Rural Development should be re-created and given increased policy formulation functions and adequate oversight of all assistance efforts directed toward farmworkers and other rural people.

(c) Staff offices should be established in each of the major DHEW departments for the sole purpose of improving the delivery services to rural people.

(d) Rural and farmworker representation must be provided on the National Health Planning Committee and the National Health Advisory Committee, and all other appropriate committees, commissions, and advisory bodies established by either the Congress or DHEW to help establish policy and guide program activities.

(e) The Secretary of DHEW should establish a National Rural Advisory Committee as quickly as possible to advise the Secretary on matters of concern to rural people and to assist in any reorganization of the Department and improvement of the functions of specific offices.



land, resources and people

"The earth and its resources belong of right to its people. . . . Without natural resources life itself is impossible. . . . The first duty of the human race . . . is to control the use of the earth and all that therein is. Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of man . . . the foresighted utilization, preservation, and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands and minerals, for the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time. . . . Concentrated wealth attributes the prosperity and progress of the United States to what it calls free enterprise. To it free enterprise means freedom to take, keep and control all resources, services, and opportunities it can, and charge for them the last possible cent.

"Just as Feudalism, with its tyranny, finally made itself intolerable, so too plutocracy, with its rule over the man by the dollar, with its hardships for the many and its luxury for the few, with its greed and its injustice, must be made to travel the same road. It is time for America and the world to move on from a social order in which unregulated profit is the driving force. It is time to move up to a social order in which quality of opportunity will cease to be a dream and actually come to pass." GIFFORD PINCHOT, 1947.

Thus wrote the Grand Old Man of the Conservation movement, the father of the Forest Service, the leader and champion of the use and control of the resources by the people instead of the plunderers and the plutocracy.

Land is man's most precious resource, from which all life springs and on which all life depends. On and beneath it, we have pre-empted incredible wealth in forests already grown, in rich deposits of minerals and the fertility of the soil.

But the rich can afford to be profligate, and for three centuries we have abused and despoiled the land. We have treated it as a commodity to be bought and sold as though some Henry Ford or Rockefeller had only to build a factory to make more. We have robbed and continue to rob the soil of much of its fertility. We have polluted our waters until the lakes have died or are dying and will no longer support life; the little trout streams of Appalachia; and elsewhere, run poisonous with acids and chemicals and dark with filth from the mines; the great streams are sewers, thick with the wasting soil "too thin to walk on — too thick to drink"; and to offset the flood of pollution we pour chemicals in the drinking water which give us cancer.

Our neglect and abuse of the land is readily seen in our cities. Sprawling commercial developments and miles of noisy freeways have swallowed up prime farmland and open spaces, leaving in their place traffic jams, disorganized communities, and air and water pollution. The same senseless disrespect for the land is evident in our small towns and rural areas. Unplanned, uncontrolled and inefficient uses of the land have made it easy for coal and timber companies, private developers and land speculators to rape our precious resource for profit.

Ownership and control of the land has become more and more concentrated. Today, 5.5% of our farmers control (own or lease) over half



Edgar Kaeding

our farmland. The eight largest energy companies own 64.6 million acres of land, along with a good chunk of our oil, gas and coal resources; timber companies hold 34.8 million acres; and railroads own 22.8 million acres. Behind these figures is a web of interlocking directorates, giving to a few tremendous wealth and power over the rest of us. When land ownership becomes more concentrated, local rural residents are locked out of the social and political decision-making process. Decisions are made far from the local community. The rights and needs of rural people and care for the environment are of little concern.

In the West where water was always more precious than land, the Congress provided that subsidized irrigation projects carried a price to land owners—a limitation of 160 acres per person, 320 for a married couple — but the violation of the Reclamation Act is nearly wholesale and has been so for decades. Enforcement is more token than real, and when it does occur, the government has failed to provide adequate credit for land acquisition. So nobody but the rich can afford to buy the developed land — an investment of \$250,000 and up. In violation of the Act, the government permits the original owners to profit from the public investment and delay in abiding by the law.

In August, 1977; the Department of Interior, responding to a court order, issued new regulations for the enforcement of the Reclamation Law of 1902 (160-acre limitation). This action was commendable, the first attempt by the Department to carry out a 75 year old Congressional mandate; it remains to be seen whether the decision is firm.

Ownership of land by Blacks has shrunk to less than half of what it was in 1950. . . . Large scale agriculture not only displaces the small and medium farmer, but it also displaces any farmer who cannot compete with vertically integrated "corporate" agriculture. When farmers go, small communities go, too.

Energy intensive agriculture which requires excessive fuel/fertilizer/pesticides and herbicides poisons the land and water.

"I saw two old turtles, first I've seen in years, and I picked them up and took them out to the garden to catch insects", the Texas farmer said. "We've killed not only the earth worms, but nearly everything else with pesticides and with the acids from the defoliants on the cotton, and to sustain our yields we add a ton of fertilizer every year to the acre. The soil is dead or dying, but as long as that's the system, farmers like me can't help themselves. We go on killing the land until we lose it."

In the past five years, the price of farmland has doubled nationally. In the Mid-West, land values have tripled. While the causes of this increase are not the same in all regions of the country, the result is that farmers who want to get started cannot afford to buy the land.

Each year now 5 million acres of land are lost to urban development, energy projects, highways, recreational development and other non-agricultural uses. One million acres or 20% of that is prime cropland.

Land and water are irreplaceable resources and their conservation and their preservation from pollution should be paramount — with private owners — and in government law and policy. This is the responsibility of stewardship and a matter of survival.

Resources like grazing lands and forests must be preserved and replenished for they are not only priceless per se but are indispensable in conserving land and water.

Exhaustible resources like oil and gas should be conserved and put to the highest social uses — not wasted for maximum profit.

The concentration of ownership and control of farm lands has already gone too far and farm lands must be dispersed among working family farmers. This is the best means for protecting consumers, assuring an abundance of output, and conserving land and water from intolerable exhaustion and pollution.



John McRaith



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National Land Inventory: More detailed information must be obtained on land-use, ownership and/or control. Federal agencies collect this information on a regular basis. Their findings should be coordinated and the results made available to the public in a meaningful form. At a minimum, information should be obtained on land usage, topography, soil type, type of owner, (individual, corporate, governmental unit, cooperative, etc.), the major occupation, and/or source of income of the owner, the residential location of the owner in proximity to the land and the owner's equity in the land.

2. Diversion of Farm Land:

(a) In addition to a national rural land inventory, both the Federal and state governments must act to slow the loss of farm lands to other uses. A beginning step would be swift passage of the Agricultural Land Policy Act providing assistance to local and state governments wanting to initiate programs to preserve prime farm land.

(b) State and local governments should cooperate in programs for lowering taxes on farmer-owned land in agriculture production, with penalties to recapture foregone taxes if land is used for other purposes.

(c) Speculation in farm lands must be inhibited and the best immediate means is repeal of the Federal capital gains privilege.

(d) States must also assume responsibility through capital gains taxation. The Vermont Land Gain tax or the Montana Land Speculation tax are good models.

(e) Congress should require the Federal Reserve Board to establish higher reserve requirements for bank loans for purposes of land speculation.

3. Family Farmers: (See also Agricultural Production, Sec. 5) Working family farmers should be the basic foundation of our agriculture. To this end:

(a) To ensure the establishment of small resident family farmers, the final rules directing the Bureau of Reclamation to enforce the Reclamation Act or any new legislation must include the following provisions:

- A lottery.
- A 15 mile residency requirement.
- A 640 acre maximum operational size limit.
- No leases except on public lands.
- Tight appraisal procedures to prevent speculative profits by large landowners.

(b) Antitrust controls on vertical integration in agriculture and restrictions on corporate ownership of land should be enacted and strictly enforced.

4. National Land Use: A national land use planning bill must be passed by Congress.

5. Timber:

(a) National forests are being neglected at great cost to everybody, and the penny-wise policies of leaving them unplanted, unthinned, etc. must be abandoned.

(b) Technical and financial assistance must be provided for the establishment of cooperative timber industry businesses initiated and operated by workers themselves.

(c) Federal and state governments must begin to extend the basic protection of the laws to workers who cut and haul pulpwood for the international paper companies. Such protection should include terminating the importation of foreign labor, extending the full protection of the National Labor Relations Act and prosecuting illegal market control of pulpwood prices by pulp and paper corporations.

6. Strip Mining: The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, as finally passed will do little to protect land and people against the ravages of strip mining. The law must first be strengthened and then strictly enforced.

7. Water:

(a) Stringent regulations governing water pollution due to mining operations and agricultural and industrial uses should be established and enforced.

(b) Special advantages granted to users of Federal reclamation district water such as low-cost energy, low-interest government loans, tax reductions and cheap or free water should be removed.

(c) Congress should establish an acreage limitation on irrigated lands using non-Federal water.

(d) Congress should mandate joint management of ground and surface water.

8. People's Values are Influenced by Their Experience: New models of land ownership can provide experiences which help shape a new attitude toward land. Land trusts or other alternative forms of ownership throughout rural America are demonstrating that alternatives are possible and effective in changing values. Such trusts should be encouraged and information about them widely shared.

9. Man Must Live With Nature: The ultimate recommendation is for the development of a new attitude toward nature of which land and water are only part, an attitude that this finite planet is man's only home; that man is not God and must live with nature, not control it; that all of us must be stewards of this earth, and those who are a bit reluctant to be so must be required to abide by the new common sense of the community.



George Ballis

SECTION 4

agricultural production



Bob Bergland

All Americans and, indeed, a good portion of the world's population have reason to be vitally concerned with the output of our farms and the care with which farmers act as steward of our land and water resources.

The strength of our agriculture has been an enormously rich land base, the skill and hard work of farmers and farmworkers, and scientific and technological improvements. For centuries, we have been profligate with our land resources, and it now appears that the current system of production — reliance on chemical fertilizers and large scale use of poisons and insecticides — threatens to damage permanently the basic means of human existence.

There is no satisfactory substitute for the working family farmer either in conserving the land and its fertility or in producing crops, but family farming is in jeopardy. The total number of farmers reached a peak in the thirties and since then has declined rapidly. From a total of nearly 7 million farms in 1935 the number dropped to less than 3 million in 1969. In a little over 30 years more than 60 percent of the farms disappeared. Most of the farms which disappeared were combined with other units, and most of those lost were below average size. By 1969, 151,000 farmers (5.5%) controlled (by ownership or lease) over half (54.5%) of all farm land. Corporations (21,500 of them) held 9 percent of the total farm land.

The degree of concentration in agriculture — though it varies by crop — is increasing rapidly, posing a threat to freedom of entry into farming, to competition and fair prices. Many of the farms which disappeared in recent decades were too small to permit the operators to make a decent living, but there is no doubt that farm size now tends to exceed the requirements for maximum efficiency and good living. U.S. Department of Agriculture studies conclude that "most of the economies associated with size in farming are achieved by the one-man fully mechanized farm." Beyond that point, the costs of management and paperwork increase, offsetting any other gains. Larger farms result not from the dictates of efficiency, but from economic power and national agricultural policy which is rigged against small and moderate size farmers.

That economic power includes the power of rich people and corporations to buy land in large quantities and operate it with relative inefficiency, contributing to the inflationary pressure on land values and making entry into farming nearly impossible for young farmers of modest means. The average investment required per worker was \$54,100 in 1970 compared to \$3,300 in 1940. One authority estimates that the initial investment required for a modest commercial farm is now about \$250,000.

The farmer faces great concentrations of power when he buys and when he sells. The combination threatens his survival and the welfare of the nation. Sixty-one percent of the food dollar goes to the middleman, i.e., processor, distributor and retailer. A handful of corporations garner most of the profits. For example:

- There are 32,000 middle-sector firms in the food industry, but 50 of them pocket 75% of the profits.
- Corporation control over just 13 lines of food resulted in price overcharges of \$2.1 billion in one year.

On the farm supply side:

- 65 percent of the value of tractor sales goes to two corporations, John Deere and International Harvester.

There are other ways in which working family farmers are placed in jeopardy. Corporations can make money on "tax-loss farming"; real estate speculators riding the capital gains racket, drive the price of land beyond the point where it can be used for farming; and the government has engaged in a relatively open conspiracy for 40 years to keep a cheap labor supply available to the big operators.

The drive of the big marketing-processing corporations to maximize profits and concentrate control of the market leads to "contract farming" which ultimately turns the farmer into little more than a sharecropper. He loses his independence and control of his farm.

This nation's policy toward its land and working family farmers is a concern of all consumers — urban and rural — but it is particularly vital to rural Americans because agriculture is the single largest source of rural employment and its wealth makes up much of the tax base from which rural revenues are derived. (See also Section 3 of *Land, Resources and People*).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Re-Orientation of USDA:* The forces which have led to increasing concentration of ownership and control of land and of farmers are complex and cannot be corrected by any simplistic program. The USDA must cease to be the Department of Agribusiness and become what it was always supposed to be — the agency to promote a healthy agriculture and protect the interests of consumers. It is a far cry from that today.

2. *Democratizing of USDA:* USDA must be made more responsive to the needs of the majority of farmers and other citizens as contrasted to agribusiness. One device would be to open up the Department to the public through the establishment of Advisory committees representing independent family farmers, minorities, farmworkers, consumers and environmentalists.

3. *Land Grant and Other Colleges:* Land grant colleges and the Extension Service must stop supporting large-scale and high-energy farming operations. They must give more attention to such neglected areas as cooperative marketing, organic farming, small-scale farm machinery, food quality and taste, appropriate technology, and the general health of the rural community. Other colleges and universities should be encouraged to take a more active role in resolving problems affecting family farms, consumers and rural areas.

The "Colleges of 1890", the black land grant colleges, receive a small fraction of the land grant budget. Not until 1977 were these colleges provided permanent authorizations for research and extension. They must receive an equitable share of allocations and be permitted to exercise discretion in their use.

The Extension Service must be directed to use far more of its skills and resources on average and low income farmers and to open to the public the decision-making process regarding Extension priorities, approval of new agents, and selection of the county committees.

4. *Organic Farming:* Federal and state agencies must encourage the substitution of organic nutrients for chemical fertilizers. This means developing methods to get these nutrients (sludge, manure, composted wastes and processing wastes) to farmers.

5. *Small Farm Assistance:* USDA should insist upon, and Congress should provide full funding for programs to assist small farmers. While



Ruth Kobell



Orissa Schulz

Congress and the USDA give lip service to family farmers, they do nothing to activate laws already on the books, such as the Small Farm Research and Extension program under the Rural Development Act.

USDA must be directed to undertake a major research, demonstration, education and assistance program to provide direct marketing alternatives for small farmers including urban farmers markets and cooperative buying warehousing and transportation arrangements, so that all consumers have access to foods that are fresh, flavorful and nutritious, at competitive prices.

6. Ever-Normal Granary: The concept of the ever-normal granary should be reestablished. It is not only a sensible means of removing temporary surpluses to support farm prices, but it also protects consumers at home and abroad from sudden upsurges in prices and actual hunger.

7. Improved Farm Credit: Our system of farm credit, both for operating loans and loans for land acquisition for new or young farmers, is inadequate. Existing programs should be reshaped, and the Federal and state governments should cooperate in establishing better credit programs.

Congress and the President must provide adequate staff levels for the Farmers Home Administration. The failure to do so has gone far in destroying the supervised farm credit program and crippling the other FmHA programs. Funding should be expanded for FmHA farm loans and restrictions and red tape should be reduced in the application process. Moreover, procedures for appealing rejected applications should be revised so final authority is not retained at the local level.

8. Cooperative Movement: A most effective way to strengthen the working farmer and control the growth of agribusiness is the development of cooperatives, controlled by farmers or by farmers and consumers. In 1974, USDA spent barely $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent of its total funds on cooperative development, most of that amount going into projects for the growth of existing cooperatives through mergers and centralizing authority while weakening membership control. A Congressional mandate to revitalize USDA's cooperative program is long overdue and not likely to be delivered without citizen pressure.

9. Direct Farmer Action: Farmers must have the right to organize. In order to protest injustice and alleviate economic crises, farmers must occasionally become involved in direct action such as farmer strikes with the goal of establishing both public policies and market structures which will assure them economic justice.

10. Big Business Farmers: There must be legislation at both federal and state levels to prohibit businesses with major investments in non-farm assets from engaging in agricultural production, and to ban ownership of farm lands by corporations.

(a) No system of subsidy or price supports for agriculture should be tied to volume of production. It should be designed to support family farm income and to stabilize prices at a level which encourages abundant production, rather than to provide subsidies to corporate or hobby farmers. Target price levels should be based on regularly adjusted costs of production and include provisions for publicly-held strategic reserves, stored on farms at public expense.

(b) The tendency to ever-increasing concentration of farmland ownership and control is related to concentration in the farm supply and marketing sectors. A vigorous enforcement and possibly a strengthening of the anti-trust laws in both directions would help protect the working family farmer from pressures beyond his control which jeopardize his survival and would also benefit consumers. The Federal Trade Commis-

sion should be given adequate funds to undertake investigations and report to Congress on the nature and degree of concentration in the food industry, including the impact on consumers of advertising and vertical integration.

(c) The localization of food production must be pursued through research on suitable crops, provision of technical assistance, and development of storage and processing facilities.

(d) High energy agriculture, including the mass use of insecticides and other chemicals, favors the development and expansion of factories in the field — and is inimical to working family farmers. With cheap oil and gas a thing of the past, policies to adjust to this new situation must favor the working farmer. Research and development on energy-saving agriculture alternatives conducted by land grant universities should be carried out on small and medium-sized family farms.

(e) The trading of soil for crops through erosion, in a ratio of 2 to 1, must be replaced by programs that guarantee adequate farm income and soil conservation. The Soil Conservation Service must initiate policies which effectively limit soil degeneration. Possible policies include incentives for green manure crops, crop rotations, and proper production techniques.

11. Limit on Food Advertising: Much of the food dollar is spent by agribusiness on advertising whose purpose is to peddle brand names as a weapon against the emergence of competition from new enterprises and cooperatives, and to stimulate demand for processed products of questionable quality and cost. Tax deductions for this kind of advertising as a "business expense" must be severely limited. Regulations requiring complete labelling information on sugar content, nutritional value, and cost per pound of food must be established.

12. Agricultural Census: The recent proposal to cut nearly one million farms from the agricultural census is a serious threat to family farmers. Legislation should be enacted quickly that would define a farm on the basis of agricultural products "produced", not "sold".

13. Land Speculation and Taxes: Federal and state tax laws facilitate concentration of ownership and land speculation. They should be studied in detail as part of a program for preventing the undermining of family farming, and a good beginning would be the elimination or drastic revision of the capital gains racket. (See Section 3)

14. Inheritance Taxes: Two threats to family farms are state and national inheritance taxes. The alternative to creating a special class by increasing the farm inheritance exemption is to provide an automatic source of credit when necessary to prevent inheritance tax loss of a family farm. This should be done immediately through the Farmers Home Administration.

15. Grain Marketing Investigation: The President should appoint a high-level commission to investigate the international grain marketing system. The commission's aim should be to identify ways of eliminating the manipulation of grain markets such as occurred in the Russian wheat deals of 1972 and 1977 which cost American farmers and consumers billions of dollars.

SECTION 5

hired farmworkers

The plight of farmworkers deserves special attention. The problems faced by family farmers and farmworkers have many common roots and the two groups should be allies.

Economic powerlessness denies farmworkers equal participation in the American economic system. Farmworkers have little income. Their earnings tend to be uncertain. They are subjected to the vagaries of weather, crop readiness, crew leader and agribusiness exploitation, travel difficulties and lack of adequate job market information. Unemployment and underemployment are high. Their ability to earn is impaired by practical exclusion from training programs. Skills and educational levels are low. And finally, the demand for their services in agriculture is diminishing due to mechanization and increased use of agricultural chemicals.

Political powerlessness is obvious in the total or partial exclusion of migrant and seasonal farmworkers from practically every major piece of beneficial social and worker legislation enacted into law at the Federal, state or local level. Farmworkers are not protected by law in their right to unionize. They are largely excluded from unemployment and workmen's compensation. They are only partially covered by minimum wage, child labor, fair employment, and wage payment and collection laws. Even where beneficial social and worker legislation include farmworkers, they are frequently excluded by such conditions as residence requirements (with the possible exception of rural legal services programs). Even special programs ostensibly designed to benefit farmworkers such as the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act, the Migrant Health Act, food and nutrition programs, specific programs with DOL, HEW, USDA and the Office of Education, have been of limited benefit to farmworkers because of lack of adequate enforcement, poor administration or lack of funds.

The mobility of migrants makes effective political participation difficult. Residence requirements, language hurdles, and high illiteracy rates all limit farmworker registration and voting.

The lives of farmworkers will not improve until farmworkers organize and insist on a fair share of economic and political power.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Rights of Farmworkers:* Farmworkers should enjoy the same protections under Federal and state law that are provided to workers in other occupations, including: minimum wage, overtime, and child labor protection; coverage under unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, and social security programs; the right to organize and bargain collectively through unions of their choice; coverage under wage payment and collection laws; equal employment opportunity laws; improved farm labor contractor registration laws; protection against importation of strikebreakers from foreign countries; and provisions in agricultural subsidy and price support programs — particularly disaster aid programs — for government payments to workers.

2. *End Reliance on Out-of-State Farmworkers:* We recommend ending the systematic reliance on out-of-state migrants to perform farm labor under conditions of near peonage. Those who prefer to continue per-

forming farm work as migrants should have that option, but the overwhelming majority of migrants would prefer permanent residence and steady work. Many workers are forced into migrancy for lack of other opportunities. Programs should be focused on providing greater opportunities for other work for those migrants who prefer it, and on making the best possible use of local people who wish to do farm work.

3. Decision Making: Farmworkers must secure the rights to meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives. Programs and services designed, exclusively or primarily, to benefit farmworkers should be controlled by farmworkers. Other programs and services affecting farmworkers, as well as others, should include farmworker participation in operation.

4. Farmworker Checklist: Programs providing benefits to migrant and seasonal farmworkers should include:

- (a) farmworker participation in program development and implementation;
- (b) funds to permit bicultural-bilingual operation;
- (c) prohibitions against residence requirements;
- (d) special outreach programs to assure that needs are identified and met, including, for example, transportation.

5. Include Farmworkers in Social Benefit Programs: Social benefit programs in the areas of health, housing, health education, day care and child development, and rural economic development should be fully funded and administered to include farmworkers in the benefits.

6. Consumer Boycotts: Consumer boycotts should be supported until farmworkers are assured of free, secret elections on their choice on unionization.

7. Congressional Action: Congressional Committees should be reorganized to guarantee that oversight and funding decisions by Federal agencies are reviewed continuously.

8. Establishment of a Farmworker Commission: A Farmworker Commission within the top level of the Executive Branch of government should coordinate all efforts with respect to farmworkers and publish the results annually. The Commission should have oversight responsibility for all programs of concern to farmworkers, and should include farmworkers.

9. Investigation: There should be a vigorous investigation of health, environmental protection, and education programs which are administered by and/or funded by the Federal government. Many of these programs have either disregarded their purposes or harmed farmworkers by their operation. Special emphasis should be given to assisting farmworker governed organizations to participate in the administration of these programs.

10. Illegal Aliens: Illegal aliens are easily exploited and are a device for strikebreaking. They are a deterrent to the unionization of farmworkers. Congress should provide severe penalties for employers of illegal aliens.

11. Child Labor: DOL must enforce more vigorously laws prohibiting child labor in the fields when school is in session.



Humberto Fuentes

SECTION 6

employment, jobs and training

"Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so extended as to violate natural right."—Thomas Jefferson, 1785.

The right to a job at a decent pay is one of the most fundamental human rights in an industrialized society where ownership and control are highly concentrated. In such a society, the need for a job is comparable to the need for land in an agrarian society. Both are not only a means of maintaining human existence, but symbols by which we measure our neighbors and ourselves in terms of individual and social worth. In our society a person denied a job is a person who has been deprived of the most basic right to participate in society; and the quality of that job — as measured by community standards — and the amount and continuity of pay — goes far to fix the place one occupies in the scheme of things, frequently to the third and the fourth generation.

From the standpoint of education, training and jobs, the people of small towns and rural areas have suffered discrimination for many decades. By relying on local or even state resources — and inclination — to finance public education we have subjected millions to gross discrimination, for the basic ingredient in any job training program is a basic education. There is a mountain of statistics, decades long, showing that rural children have never had a fair break on education, and the discrimination continues.

Median earnings of employed people in non-metro areas is roughly a fifth less than that of metro workers; unemployment and underemployment in rural areas are more chronic.

Because "manpower" programs are primarily urban (metro) programs, and carry with them a heritage of discrimination, they serve rural people poorly and sometimes not at all.

Some of the evidence: unemployment is defined and the figures are compiled in a manner that seriously understates the rural problem; money allocations are then made on the basis of these bogus figures.

The state-controlled employment services were, from the beginning, a political compromise loaded against rural people. Their location and staffing reflect the weight of programs like Unemployment Compensation (UC) which also discriminate against rural workers. Later acts like the Area Redevelopment Act, tied to bogus unemployment figures, rather than poverty, continued the discrimination.

The Manpower Development Training Act of 1962, hailed as a major step in creating a "manpower" policy, tied training to a "reasonable expectation of employment". It thereby greatly restricted the number and type of vocational programs (because of high unemployment in those areas) and the initial projects in rural areas were set up to train farmworkers of which there was a surplus. (USDA claimed it could not hire black secretaries because there weren't any, but years after the MDTA program was established the Atlanta region had made no attempt to train rural people as secretaries.)

The WIN program of 1967 was also written to fit the needs of urban agencies. . . . And finally came the great reversion, CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973, a part of President

Nixon's drive to shift Federal functions back to state and local governments. Regardless of whether state and local officials can or will do a "better" job of administering the programs, the formula for allocating funds put half of them where they had always been, in the cities, and split the other half between unemployment (measured with bogus figures) at 37.5 percent and a final 12½ percent tied to the amount of poverty. Moreover, the law restricts eligibility for direct funding to "prime sponsors," an entity with at least 100,000 population, thereby restricting direct grants to 175 of the nation's more than 3,000 counties and about 150 large cities — with funds for small towns and rural areas turned over to state governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Federal Grant to Each Child:* The Federal government should provide the funds necessary to put a floor under educational opportunity in the public schools for every American child.
2. *Government — Employer of Last Resort:* The government must become the employer of last resort, in fact and not in rhetoric. People have a right to a job or to ample compensation for being denied that right. Programs like Green Thumb and public service jobs should be continued and expanded. We support legislative efforts designed to accomplish these goals, such as the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill.
3. *Federal Public Employment:* Federal public employment programs must be redirected to include jobs for meeting community development needs in rural areas. Such jobs should include staff people for planning agencies, health delivery, housing delivery, legal services and education. Manpower training programs must be designed to recruit rural people and train them for these new rural jobs and on-the-farm training for rural youth. Salaries for public employees under this program should be competitive with the private market for comparable skills.
4. *Study of Discrimination:* Every aspect of the educational and the so-called "manpower" programs (law, funding and administration) should be examined critically from the viewpoint of equity for rural people. The people to be served must be involved at every level.
5. *Poverty as a Guide for Allocations:* The allocation of money, training and employment programs should be tied to poverty, with some recognition of unemployment, not the reverse.
6. *Eliminate Biased Statistics:* Equity for rural people in public employment and training programs calls for changes in the definition of unemployment.
7. *Unemployment Data:* Unemployment data for rural America are totally unreliable and must be improved immediately.
8. *Data on Hire Farmworkers:* Data on hired farmworkers are defective and misleading. The President and the Congress should act to improve reliability.
9. *Non-profits as Backstop:* Every employment and training law should include provision for funding non-profit organizations if governments concerned will not or cannot administer the programs with justice and equity.
10. *Formula for Fund Distribution:* Funds should be distributed by formula, removing the implied incentive to administrators to allow rural options to lapse so they can spend the money in the cities.
11. *Cost of Rural Training Programs:* Some programs are alleged to be



Sen. James Abourezk



more expensive to administer in rural America. If so, this is no excuse for discrimination.

12. Federalization of the Employment Service: The employment service should be Federalized, and until this is done, the states must be compelled to give rural people equity.

13. Repeal CETA: The new system of special revenue sharing which turns the manpower programs over to the states (CETA) is no guarantee that rural people will get any more services than they have in the past. It should be repealed and recreated as a national program. In the interim the "national" programs formerly financed out of special allotments must be retained and re-established. This is particularly true of the funds for migrant workers.

The "prime sponsor" definition should be deleted from the law, but, if it is retained, governors should be required to re-allocate their funds in accordance with the basic formula in the law.

SECTION 7

rural housing and community development

"The Congress hereby declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation and the health and living standards of its people require . . . the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family. . . ." Housing Act of 1949

Rural areas have about one-third of the nation's population but about half of its substandard housing. 1975 data indicates that more than 3¼ million nonmetropolitan households live in units that are physically inadequate and another 2¾ million households must pay more than 30% of their income to secure housing that is suitable. Those who suffer the multiple disadvantages of being poor, minority, and rural residents are worst off. (A Black household with an income of less than \$5,000 living in a nonmetro area is seven times as likely to be in bad housing as the average American family.)

Nearly three decades after the Congress stated as its goal the realization of "a decent home . . . for every American family," this nation still lacks a housing policy designed to meet housing needs and which does not leave the national purpose at the mercy of local will or capacity, or private initiatives or interests. Because of the higher incidence of bad housing in rural areas caused by lower incomes, less credit and fewer institutions necessary to deliver housing there, a national policy must address itself specifically to rural needs.

To provide decent housing for those persons most in need will require substantially more dollars than are currently being devoted to the task. By necessity, those will have to be "Federal" dollars.

We are providing three times as much in indirect housing subsidies to middle and upper income families as we allocate to direct subsidies for low and moderate income housing. A reordering of priorities can certainly underwrite a national housing policy that is both equitable and realistic in size.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY*

1. Level of Commitment: The primary purpose of Federal policy should be to provide adequate assistance for all who cannot obtain safe and decent housing for a reasonable portion of their income. We urge a level of Federal housing support for low and moderate income people sufficient to secure annually a level of 600,000 new or adequately rehabilitated units and to subsidize the occupants of another 600,000 units of existing standard housing. At least half the Federal housing funds should be allocated to nonmetropolitan areas.

2. National Administrative Responsibility: All Federal housing and community development programs for rural areas should be administered by a single-purpose rural-oriented agency for rural development. It should maintain a field staff structure like that of Farmers Home Administration and should have research, outreach and technical assistance capabilities in addition to credit and subsidy functions. It should target its resources first to the areas of greatest need.



Gordon Cavanaugh

3. Local Housing Delivery System: An effective new housing delivery system responsive to local needs must be created. We suggest that the successful rural electrification program provides a useful model. Local rural housing associations, chartered under state law but serving as delegates of a Federal program could serve to decentralize the basic administration of rural housing programs. Federal and state governments should foster such a development by providing technical, financial and administrative assistance to local and multicounty organizations which have or can build the capacity to deliver rural housing and community facilities and which, like rural electric cooperatives, are controlled by those they serve, and agree to the principle of area responsibility.

4. Financing and Subsidy Arrangements: We recommend the establishment of a deep subsidy rural home ownership program that will assist families to become homeowners by subsidizing the difference between 25% of a family's adjusted income and the actual costs of home ownership (including taxes, insurance, and utilities). Similarly, rental assistance should be available to all who must pay more than 25% of income for adequate rental housing.

5. Role of States: States must recognize the important role they can play in housing rural people, including:

- (a) Providing technical assistance to rural communities and organizations on Federal housing programs and planning.
- (b) Providing information on effects of state tax laws on low and moderate income housing.
- (c) Regulation of housing and the housing industry through such measures as zoning, building, housing and mobile home construction codes; mobile home park and site regulations; and landlord-tenant law.
- (d) Providing seed money loans for low-income housing projects.
- (e) Providing housing services and enforcing Fair Housing and Civil Rights statutes.
- (f) Assisting in land acquisition and "market aggregation".

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS

We cannot wait nor should we wait for the ultimate piece of housing legislation. There are things that can be done under existing legislation which would go far in meeting the needs of many people.

1. Minimal Sanitary Facilities:

- (a) As an emergency health and housing measure the Federal government should locate every household in the nation that currently lacks even a pit toilet that meets basic sanitary standards and within the next two years see to it that every dwelling has at least that minimum facility.
- (b) Farmers Home Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency should coordinate their programs for assistance in waste disposal so that Federal aid will be targeted on those rural communities with the greatest need, so that grant assistance will be sufficient to keep total user costs within 1½ % of median income levels, and so that alternatives to the conventional central sewer system can be utilized where appropriate.

*In a number of places, these recommendations reflect resolutions adopted by the delegates to the Third National Rural Housing Conference and subsequently endorsed by the Board of RURAL AMERICA.



Rep. John Breckinridge

2. Farmers Home Administration: FmHA remains the key credit agency for small farmers and low-income housing and community facilities. It must not be dismantled by the transfer of functions to other agencies. Instead, both the program and the personnel resources of FmHA should be expanded to allow it to meet the needs of rural America and to take responsibility for the formulation of a comprehensive rural housing and community development.

FmHA must do a better job of targeting its housing assistance on those most in need — the families with incomes below the poverty level. FmHA should develop standards—such as in energy-efficiency—which reduce the cost of housing.

3. Department of Housing and Urban Development: As long as HUD remains responsible for providing assistance to small town and rural people, it must achieve equitable distribution of resources to those places. HUD should devote at least 20 to 30 percent of its staff resources and research and demonstration money to rural people.

4. Farmworker Housing: (See also Section 6, Farm Labor) The need is for a national farmworker housing policy that effectively works toward the elimination of the disgraceful housing conditions of farmworkers. As a first step, the Federal government must see to the gathering of complete and accurate data on the character and extent of farmworker housing needs as the basis for a plan of action.

In the meantime, FmHA's farm labor housing grant program must be funded at greatly increased levels and regulations rewritten so that it can be used where migrant farmworkers will occupy the houses for only parts of the year. Greater reliance must be placed on tenant control over decisions concerning the operation of the projects.

5. Native American Housing: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) should develop and implement a national policy for Indian housing. That policy should be based on a comprehensive survey of Indian housing needs on and off of reservations; it should recognize, support and respect the unique legal relationships derived from treaties, executive orders and legislation that exists between the United States and Indian tribes; and it should extend HUD assistance to Indians who reside in off-reservation areas.

Farmers Home Administration must do a better job of responding to Native American housing needs.

Finally, a minimum level of Federal commitment should be yearly assistance to 15,000 units of Indian housing through HUD programs, 3,000 units through FmHA programs.

6. Elderly and Handicapped Housing: (See also Section 14, Rural Aging) HUD, HEW and FmHA should clarify and coordinate the roles and responsibilities of each in providing housing and related social services to the rural elderly and handicapped. HUD needs to insure that its administration of the Section 202 Elderly Housing program does not discriminate against rural sponsors and that there is an equitable distribution of the funds in this program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development programs usable in rural areas are scattered through a half dozen departments, agencies, bureaus and commissions at the Federal level. Little if any coordination exists. As a result, a rural community intent on providing adequate community facilities and services, depending upon where it is located, might have to turn to HUD for block grant assistance, a different part of HUD for housing, the



Harold O. Wilson



Clanton Beamon

Farmers Home Administration for housing and water and sewer funds, industrial park and community facilities funds, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Public Health Service, the Community Services Administration, *ad nauseum*.

Several basic points must be recognized when talking about rural community development: (1) rural communities generally have fewer of the basic community facilities such as adequate water and waste disposal systems, streets, sidewalks, fire protection, public transportation, medical facilities, etc., than do urban communities; thus their need on a per capita basis is higher; (2) rural communities more often lack a broad tax base which could support even minimal community development; (3) rural communities more often lack the sophisticated skills necessary to meet the planning and packaging requirements imposed by the Federal bureaucracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Department of Rural Affairs: There must be created a Department of Rural Affairs, a new Federal department with responsibility for meeting the needs of rural people, including housing, community facilities, health, transportation, and other services.

2. Housing and Community Development Act of 1974: Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Block Grants) must be amended substantially if it is to be useful in meeting rural community development needs. First, it must be funded at substantially higher levels. Second, the entitlement formula must be altered to recognize that rural communities lag behind urban communities in basic community facilities. (At the very least funds should presently be divided between metro and nonmetro areas under the entitlement formula rather than on arbitrary 80-20 basis. Under the existing entitlement formulas, nonmetro areas would receive 35-40 percent of the funds.)

Third, the distribution of nonmetro funds among the states should be based on a needs formula that is more suitable to rural and small-town areas and one that gives the largest weight to poverty as an indicator or need.

3. CSA Rural Development Initiative: We advocate a major rural development initiative on the part of the Community Services Administration funded at an initial level of at least \$100 million a year. These funds could provide financial support to public, non-profit, or cooperative organizations that would conduct flexible programs of rural development (including enterprises, job creation and training, development of local government capacity, community facilities, and transportation) for the direct benefit of low-income residents. CSA's first responsibility is to fund programs in the hundreds of unserved counties.

4. Rural Development Act of 1972: While the Rural Development Act of 1972 should not, and cannot, be viewed as a panacea, those elements of it which are vital to rural communities should be implemented and funded. One thing is very clear — the usefulness of the legislation can never be tested and, if necessary, amended, unless it is implemented.

5. Rural Development Service: We firmly oppose cramming RDS into FmHA because that destroys its capacity to function as it should.



Karen Hanson

rural health and medical care

"Health care is a right for all and not just a privilege for a few. . . . We have the best health care in the world in the United States — but the problem is that it's reserved for the rich and the powerful people of this country."

—SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY

(The following section was reviewed and adopted by RURAL AMERICA members on December 7, 1977. Basically, it reflects the findings and recommendations of the First and Second National Conferences on Rural America. In addition, over two hundred RURAL AMERICA members and participants in the National Rural Health Conference adopted a comprehensive rural health policy statement and established the Rural Health Council of RURAL AMERICA. The policy statement will be published as a companion to this document, entitled *Toward a Rural Health Platform*. Copies can be obtained from RURAL AMERICA. In the future, it will be the responsibility of the Rural Health Council to develop and propose revisions in the health policy statement for consideration by the RURAL AMERICA membership.)

Nowhere in the United States is the need for an improved health system more pressing and nowhere is the system less adequate than in rural America. The situation is getting worse, not better, despite the cheerful reports of the American Medical Association and some government officials. In the last 30 years, the net effects of tardy and miserly government efforts have not improved conditions so much as they have just barely prevented them from becoming scandalous!

Infant deaths in many of the poor and rural areas of this country are double those in the wealthier, urban states. Moreover, this gap, measured by the number of preventable infant deaths, has been increasing rather than declining in the last decade. Maternal mortality rates reveal a similar situation. While women in rural America make up only 20 percent of all women of childbearing age, they account for 50 percent of all maternal deaths.

Approximately 51 million people, representing 25 percent of the total U.S. population, reside in medically underserved areas. Thirty million, or roughly 60 percent, are rural residents. Of the nearly 1,500 medically underserved counties that have been identified, 1,400 (or 95%) of them are nonmetropolitan.

Medical care costs money, and the median family income of rural people is about 27 percent less than that of urban families. Moreover, health insurance is much more commonly available in urban areas where approximately 90 percent of the families have some kind of medical insurance contrasted with 60-65 percent in non-urban areas. With lower incomes and less insurance, rural people can afford less medical care.

The basic reason for poor medical care is the gross maldistribution of doctors and other medical personnel between rural and metropolitan areas. Many rural towns and communities face severe shortages of health professionals and medical facilities. According to the AMA's own reports, there is a clear inverse ratio between the size of the community and the number of practicing physicians. For example, the ratio of physicians to population nationally was 1 to 1,432 in the larger rural



towns, to as much as 1 to 2,512 in isolated areas. In the most urbanized communities, the population had access to nearly five times the number of physicians as the people in the most rural areas.

Looked at another way, although roughly 31 percent of our national population resides in rural America, it is served by only 12 percent of the nation's doctors, and just 18 percent of the nurses. Since 1963, the number of counties without a single physician has increased from 98 to 135, and in a large number of rural counties the number of doctors has declined. The relative shortage of medical personnel in rural America has grown worse in each decade since 1950.

The cost of medical care is skyrocketing, rising an average of 6.6 percent a year from 1967 to 1971 and leaping at a rate of 18 percent a year since price controls were lifted in 1974. A week in the hospital brings an average bill of \$990; the delivery of a baby costs \$950. Twenty-two percent of all families have medical bills in excess of \$1,000 each year and 25 million people have no health insurance, with the uninsured concentrated in rural America.

Medical care alone is not a health system. Health and nutrition, education, food, decent housing and preventive measures are vital.

In the prevention field: 30,000 communities lack a centralized sanitary water system and this does not include isolated population; sewer facilities are a serious problem for millions. In West Virginia, 60 percent of all homes have dangerous sewer systems. Only 60 percent of rural children are immunized against communicable diseases.

Eleven Federal programs in Fiscal Year 1975 spent approximately \$1 billion on health services. Rural people received only about one-quarter of these funds. In only three of the eleven programs did rural people get more than 30% which a simple population base would have dictated. Of the more than \$21 billion spent by the Federal government on Medicaid, Medicare, and supplemental medical insurance programs, roughly 25% went to people in nonmetropolitan areas. This maldistribution of funding persists despite the fact that almost 50% of the poor and nearly 60% of our medically underserved population are rural residents.

Statistics tend to mask the humiliation and miseries endured by rural people as they seek health care in a 'sellers' market. Many small town residents must travel fifty or even 100 miles for ordinary medical service. Families without automobiles are out of luck, since public transportation in rural America has all but disappeared. In many Appalachian communities, a person wanting to see his doctor in town often pays a neighbor as much as \$30 for taxi service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Health—Not Just Medical Care:* The emphasis of citizens and Congress should be on health—not medical care. It is ridiculous and wasteful to design a health system for rural people without including preventive measures, including health education, unpolluted water, sanitation facilities, decent housing, and nutrition.
2. *Public Health Systems:* Private medicine has failed. It is the responsibility of government to protect the people where the private market has failed. What is required is a willingness to do battle with ideology, a willingness to fight special interest groups, a willingness to experiment, to try, to fail and to try again.
3. *National Health Insurance:* The single most important need is for adequate national health care legislation which should include:
 - (a) Comprehensive benefits, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, available and accessible to all people with no barriers to service.





Marie Cirillo

(b) Financing by a progressive income tax surcharge for health.

(c) Administration for interrelated quality and cost controls by a public agency free of control by either the organized medical or insurance industries and providing meaningful consumer involvement in the development, implementation and operation of all health programs.

(d) Public or nonprofit prepaid group practice associations, controlled by those they serve. In rural America today the greatest need is for adequate ambulatory medical care which can best be provided by multi-specialty medical group practice with ready access to nearby hospitals.

(e) Capital funds adequate for acquisition of necessary facilities.

(f) Provisions for eliminating the shortage of all health personnel.

4. Flexible Programs to Meet Rural Needs: Legislation designed to solve the health problems of the majority of the population which lives in metropolitan areas will fail to solve the problems of rural people. Rural areas cannot and should not allocate their resources like mini-urban areas. Programs should be structured to permit the people involved to determine their own program and its future . . . comprehensive programs that recognize a diversity of priorities and permit and encourage the development of community responsibility and community determination.

5. Innovations: The use of "physician extenders"—nurse practitioners or physicians' assistants—is a means of increasing the availability of health services to under-served people, rural or urban. In order to be most effective such personnel should be members of teams containing physicians.

Small rural clinics, staffed by nurses and paraprofessionals, can provide most medical services including some from which they are excluded by law, such as prescribing drugs and serving patients who qualify for Medicaid. These clinics, along with outreach programs, should be allocated Federal funds for training of paraprofessionals and teaching self-help methods.

The Social Security Act should be amended so that Medicare, Medicaid and subsequent forms of National Health Insurance would include among eligible benefits the primary health care services rendered by a physician or physician extender, provided that the care is rendered in accordance with the prevailing medical practice laws of the state.

6. Caveat on Regionalization: "Regionalization" in medical care—in the best sense—can be useful, but it has an ominous and too-familiar ring, bearing a resemblance to the notions which have spelled the decline of small towns, the elimination of local hospitals, the trend from consolidation of schools to centralization for the administrator's sake; to the abandonment of railroads, the mapping of highways which eliminate small towns. ("Regionalization", "centralization" and "growth centers" are terms for adulterated metropolityanna.)

7. Medical Schools: There should be an assessment of medical schools to assure that we are producing enough practitioners—and other health professionals and the proper kind of practitioners to meet the requirements of society.

(a) We must expand training in primary care and family medicine fields and reduce specialization;

(b) We must increase support of special health education programs which offer training in rural areas;

(c) We must reduce the personal cost of medical education so that we can train more lower income and working class people, but medical schools, medical students and the Congress must be impressed with the

fact that the \$50,000 which it costs to educate a doctor is paid primarily from public funds, not by the student. The same is true of all other health personnel. The community has a right—in exchange for public subsidy and a medical education—to exact a pledge for service anywhere the welfare of the community requires such service.

A health manpower program providing for required practice in rural areas should be enacted and every graduate from any Federally subsidized medical school made subject to it without regard to race, sex, income or geographic origin. Provisions must be made for training paramedical personnel as extenders of existing service until a major overhaul of the distribution of physicians can be completed. There should be no connection between student loan provisions and required service in rural areas. Funds should be put into the creation of or expansion of schools which function and recruit their students from rural America and other medically underserved areas.

Funding of these rurally-oriented schools must be put ahead of further expansion of urban schools until rural Americans have adequate health care.

8. Occupational Diseases: "Occupational diseases infect the nation like a plague . . . the American workplace is a chamber of horrors and the . . . hours a worker spends on the job [are] the most dangerous of his life." (Arnold Miller, United Mine Workers of America)

Prevention of work related illness would be a greater contribution to reducing death and disability than elimination of communicable disease.

(a) Workers' compensation laws do not cover the costs of job accidents, forcing the burden of those costs on the community or the injured person. Workers' compensation should be Federalized as there is no hope that the states will revise their laws to fit the task because of the influence of corporations who seek to evade paying the real costs of production.

(b) Training of doctors to take good work histories and improve knowledge of diagnosis and treatment is essential. This should be a function of medical schools, Schools of Public Health and organized medicine.

(c) The Congress must incorporate diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of job-related disease and disability into the national health insurance act.

(d) EPA and OSHA must be strengthened and must impose more rigid standards on agriculture and then enforce them. This is not just for hired farmworkers; farmers die too.

9. HMO Act Funds: The Health Maintenance Act should be revised to earmark not less than 30 percent of these funds for rural people, and to provide that if those funds are not expended in a given year they are either carried over or revert to the Treasury. The present act puts a premium on grant swinging and penalizes those who need the service most. The present act is defective because it does not provide funds for construction of care facilities, transportation and equipment as in the original act.

10. HMO Administration: HEW administration of the Health Maintenance Organization Act and the guidelines it has established for eligibility for that program, are inimical to the interests of the people of small towns and rural America and must be modified, by legislation if necessary.

11. More Built-In Discrimination: The National Health Planning and Service Act of 1974 threatens to intensify the urban bias in health service delivery with its 500,000 minimum population requirement for

formation of health service areas. This is typical of the tendency by writers of legislation to disregard the interests of rural people.

We need mechanisms, legislative or administrative, which would guarantee decentralization of input into Health Systems Agencies so that rural people will have an adequate voice. There must be a rigorous system of accountability which guarantees that the area health plan which emerges from the Health Systems Agency reflects rural needs:

12. Clearinghouse on Research: There should be recognition of the importance of improved information on rural health and the availability of research findings to practitioners. A clearinghouse should be set up for these purposes.

13. Support and Improvement of Existing Programs: The concern and support expressed for a comprehensive system of national health care should not obscure the need for support and funding for existing programs, e.g. the migrant health program, nor excuse concerned people from monitoring, policing and criticizing existing programs.

14. Grandiose Plans to the Contrary: The least Congress, HEW and EPA can do is to provide clean water and a sanitary pit toilet to every family in the nation—immediately.



education in rural america

All rural Americans are shortchanged by the public educational system. Billions of dollars have been spent by rural people on their primary and secondary schools with virtually no Federal assistance. Yet, over 80% of the educated youth migrate into metropolitan areas at the peak of their productive lives. This loss is a basic cause of poverty in rural America.

Many rural Americans are denied an equal educational opportunity. In 1970, 5.3% of the school-age children living in rural areas were not enrolled in school, compared to 3.8% for metropolitan areas. Absenteeism is attributed to several factors. Some farming families are forced to pull their children out of school at harvest time. Children of migrant workers are constantly uprooted and moved from town to town as their parents seek employment. Poor rural families cannot always afford a school lunch or adequate clothing, and many schools do not provide free meals. Because rural children frequently do not receive proper health care, illness and malnutrition have a higher incidence than in urban areas. With the increase in consolidation of schools, transportation problems prevent some youths from attending school.

The deficiencies of the rural educational system are not new. In 1975, over 2 million rural adults had less than five years of schooling. And for minorities, comparable figures are even more appalling—24.1% of the black population had left school by the fifth grade. The figures for Mexican-Americans and Native Americans are much higher. On the average, rural illiteracy rates are nearly twice those of metropolitan areas.

These problems are directly linked to the present system of public elementary and secondary school financing. Schools at the local level are supported largely by the local government units, with varying amounts of state aid. The Federal contribution is small. In 1976, an estimated total of \$65.2 billion were spent on public elementary and secondary education from the following sources: local, \$35.1 billion (53.8%), state \$27.4 billion (42%), Federal \$2.7 billion (4.2%), i.e. Federal, about 4¢ of each dollar.

Local governments, especially rural governments, derive a substantial amount of their income from the local property tax. In 1974, local property tax revenues accounted for \$46.5 billion, 53% of total local government revenues (excluding inter-governmental exchanges). In that same year, local governments spent 45% of their budget on education—and much more than that in rural, poorer communities. Yet this support is not sufficient for most rural schools, resulting in inadequately trained and overworked teachers, low salaries, limited facilities and materials, restricted curricula, and a lack of guidance and counseling services. Even though rural real estate is often underassessed, higher tax rates are not likely to meet these needs.

Rural school children represent 32% of all enrolled school children, ages 5-17. They are consistently discriminated against by the Federal government. Federal outlays for 1973 show that rural areas received only 11% of library and materials funds, 13% of basic vocational aid, 8% of migrant education aid, 20% of bilingual education funds, and 25% of Educational Opportunity Grant Program funds. Add to that, the unavailability to rural children of some national programs, such as those for the handicapped and gifted children, and the case is even clearer.

Rural education must be viewed as the most important tool for the prevention and elimination of poverty. Uneducated or poorly educated rural people will continue to be the victims—not the beneficiaries—of progress.

Attempts to upgrade the quality of rural education should be fully mindful of a serious present pitfall. The curricula and training in rural schools tend to mimic metropolitan design. Rural children and youth are not educated on rural problems, trained to deal with them, and encouraged to seek rural careers.

An inadequate public school system results in: illiteracy, lack of marketable skills, lost opportunity, and limited capacity for self-government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Federal Financial Support: The Federal government should provide sufficient financial support for an adequate system of primary and secondary education to assure every American child the right to a basic education.

2. State Responsibility: Since tax disparities between communities are great, reliance on local property taxes as the major means of financing public education must be phased out.

States should increase their efforts to equalize educational opportunity by financial contributions distributed equitably to all local school systems.

3. School Consolidation: While Federal and State financial assistance is vital in meeting educational needs in rural areas, control over rural school districts must remain in the hands of local residents. School consolidation, which tends to weaken communities and reduce or eliminate parental participation, should be a decision made by the individual community. Consolidation of rural school districts—for centralization's sake only—is in part a tragic result of the failure of Federal and State governments to provide adequate financial aid to rural education. Upgrading of rural education must be the primary goal of consolidation.

4. Direction of Rural Education: The quality and direction of rural education must be reevaluated to be more responsive to the needs of rural people at the primary, secondary, post-secondary, and continuing education levels. The rural-educational system must provide opportunities, including expanded vocational education programs, to prepare people for the jobs available in either rural or urban society.

(a) A special task force should be set up to review the urban bias of Federal and State education programs, including special education for the gifted and handicapped.

(b) An affirmative action program should be implemented to provide community programs, and to facilitate a learning and skills exchange, non-traditional education programs, adult basic education, and adult continuing education for rural and small town people.

(c) Public education must acknowledge original and ethnic differences. Although all rural ethnic minorities must be taken into account, in program and curriculum design, we call special attention to the years of neglect, poor education and miseducation offered the rural children of American Indian, French Canadian, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Black people. In this context, we call upon the Federal government to structure into its policies ample flexibility for application in local situations.

(d) Priority should be given to the development and strengthening of working relationships with institutions of higher education which are

sensitive and responsive to rural issues and problems. New programs of study aimed at these problems must be established at the undergraduate levels.

5. Multi-District Service Agencies: The Federal government must subsidize the creation of multi-district regional agencies to assist local communities which need help in applying for State and Federal funds.

6. School Lunch: To permit adequate learning performance, every school age child in need should receive ample wholesome meals. Free breakfast and lunch programs help to diminish the destructive class discrimination which frequently precludes equal educational opportunity.

7. Transportation: Every child should have an enforceable right to public transportation to and from school, regardless of the distance. This is a particularly great need, for example, on some Indian reservations but is by no means restricted to reservations.



SECTION 10

energy and rural people

The costs of squandering our energy resources through wasteful production and consumption are now coming home. Blessed by an enormously rich heritage, Americans have long looted precious resources with little thought of the future.

Habits are hard to change, and our leadership is failing to face up to what is needed. The Federal government is spending \$368 million dollars a year on solar energy, contrasted with \$3 billion dollars allocated for nuclear energy.

Federal energy policy must distinguish between the needs of the poor and non-poor, of rural and non-rural people, and include programs responsive to the special needs of each.

RESOURCES IN JEOPARDY

Many people believe America is being pushed into a dangerous dependence on a highly centralized, high-technology, capital-intensive electric economy. Utilities are racing to build hundreds of gigantic coal-fired and nuclear-powered generating plants to provide electricity largely for urban areas. Their size, risks and impacts result in their being built in rural areas far from the population centers for which the power is intended.

New types of extremely high voltage transmission lines with serious hazards to health and safety are planned to wheel electricity across miles of countryside to the cities. Many areas stand to be sacrificed to satisfy the urban appetite for power. Rural land will be devoured by uranium mines and mills, strip mines for coal, sites for power plants and transmission lines, and radioactive waste disposal sites. Rural land, crops, water and air will be polluted by the uranium mining and milling as well as the operations of nuclear and coal-fired generators.

Rural towns will be impacted by large influxes of temporary workers whose impact on local public services, tax structures and economic life will be disruptive in the short run and burdensome in the long run. Native Americans will be threatened with loss of their water, land, and culture on the reservations under which much of the nation's uranium, coal and water resources lay.

THE CONSUMER PAYS

At great cost to the consumer and independent dealers, the government has permitted the growth of energy cartels which have the power to control supply and therefore prices. These cartels own oil, natural gas, coal and uranium reserves, and are moving to gain control of solar patents and other alternative sources of energy. They are permitted to lease lands from the government for fuel exploration without reporting on their findings. Monopolistic restraints on production are ubiquitous in the energy industry.

As consumers, rural people are extremely dependent upon auto transportation for access to stores, jobs, doctors, schools and friends because of the lack of public transit systems. They are also losing their railroads, the most energy efficient form of transportation, i.e. the one mode of transportation which needs less fuel than it did in 1950 to transport the same load of freight or people.

THE ENERGY-FOOD COMPLEX

Government policies favor energy-intensive agriculture, and the impact of those policies is once again being felt most directly in rural areas. Agriculture uses more petroleum than any other single industry nationwide. It consumes about 2.5 percent of the nation's electricity. Since 1950, the use of fossil-fuel produced nitrogen fertilizers and synthetic organic chemicals has increased about 500 percent. In one year, from October 1973 to September 1974, fertilizer price increases ranged from 19 percent for phosphates to 142 percent for anhydrous ammonia.

Spiralling fertilizer costs are not strictly due to fossil fuel shortages. According to a study by the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, while the fertilizer manufacturer paid 43 percent more for the energy needed to manufacture anhydrous ammonia fertilizer between 1970 and 1974, the price to the farmer increased by 141 percent. The cost of propane (essential to the manufacture of plastics) tripled in 1973 largely because the petro-chemical companies were expanding their plastics production and bid prices up.

A food system wedded to wasteful energy now uses 10 calories of fossil fuel for each calorie of food delivered. Eighty percent of the world's total annual production of energy would be required to feed the world population with an American food system.

The irony is that agriculture could be an energy *producer*. Farming methods which are not fossil-fuel energy intensive have been found to be efficient, pollution free, less expensive, productive of more nutritious foods, and suitable to the scale of the average sized farm. Yet these methods are discouraged by USDA, holder of the purse strings over agricultural programs, discouraged by the extension service, influential relayer of information to our producers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *U.S. Department of Energy:* The Department of Energy must be the final arbiter of national policy in energy, with veto power over the decisions of other Federal agencies. It should make long range plans, and, by requiring "Energy Impact Statements," try to gauge the consequences of national energy activities before damage is done.

2. *Excessive Electrification:* Rural America should resist the efforts of the Administration and the utilities to make the nation dependent on an electrical energy supply which benefits the urban areas at the expense of rural people.

The destruction of viable, rural agricultural communities by massive energy conversion developments is to be condemned. Federal energy policy should divert such developments to urban demand centers where the impact of large developments can be more easily accommodated and where the structure of the community will not be so radically altered.

3. *Nuclear Energy:* The continued use of nuclear power to generate electricity should be rejected on both economic and environmental grounds. The diversion of capital into nuclear power precludes development of more appropriate, safe, renewable energy resources. The federal government should immediately begin phasing out existing nuclear facilities and substitute safe, renewable energy sources adequate to meet present and future real needs. No more nuclear power plants should be constructed and guidelines should be established for the decommissioning of on-the-line facilities as rapidly as possible.

4. *High Voltage Transmission Restrictions:* Because of possible biological hazards, environmental impact and economic inequities, planning and construction of high voltage transmission lines should be halted until



Barry Commoner



Mike Clark

upper limits on high voltage transmission are set. Practical decentralized alternative energy resources should be given priority.

5. Rural America and Energy: President Carter's energy plan assigns to rural America the responsibility of providing coal based energy to the nation, but it offers nothing in return. The 102-page plan never mentions mine safety. It never mentions Black Lung disease. It never mentions housing for the workers.

We take the position that an energy plan which ignores people is no plan at all. Future resource development in rural America must be based on the following general principles:

(a) The cost of coal production must include strict enforcement of mine safety laws and regulations. This must be a true production cost—not something the corporations impose on society, while they pocket unreal profits.

(b) Miners must have the right to enforce safety and health standards on the job without fear of being fired or suffering discrimination.

(c) Those who have ruined their lungs mining coal for society must be fairly compensated.

(d) Comprehensive national health and pension benefits must be part of any energy program.

(e) The production of energy must not be permitted to destroy our air, land, and water.

(f) Giant corporations controlling production of many forms of energy represent an intolerable concentration of economic and political power, accountable to nobody. They must be broken up. Coal must be produced by coal companies subject to effective regulation.

(g) Coal production cannot be increased without providing services to coal-mining communities. These include:

- (1) Acquisition of land presently controlled by absentee corporations
- (2) Construction of decent housing.
- (3) Provision of basic community services such as water, sewer,
- (4) General improvement of education opportunities.

(h) A Federal tax on coal production must be enacted and used to establish a regional community services development fund.

(i) Energy development must be based on stable, long-range production planning that can be the foundation for full employment and job security throughout the region.

(j) People expected to produce energy for others must be able to consume energy at fair rates. If massive new power plants are part of Appalachia's future, the people of the region must be consulted about their location and must share in the profits.

6. Energy Costs: Measures to hold down or decrease energy costs should include:

(a) A Federal oil, gas and coal corporation, patterned along the TVA concept to provide consumers with a "yardstick" through development of oil, gas and coal resources on publicly owned Federal land containing large reserves.

(b) Legislation to prohibit multiple ownership by one company of oil, natural gas, coal, and uranium reserves, to prohibit vertical integration in the energy industries, and to compel divestiture.

(c) Federal surveillance over the production, marketing and inventory of domestic fuels to avoid price fixing by a relatively few large producers.

(d) Public ownership of local utilities and consumer-owned non-

Albert Krebs



profit energy cooperatives, encouraged and supported by all levels of government.

(e) Oil pricing regulation, e.g., a ceiling price for "old oil," and an "incentive" price for recovered and new oil, along with a higher price for imported oil. For gas, an equivalent system permitting an incentive price for maintaining production, and a price lid on old gas (from wells already operating). Incentive prices should be strictly an interim measure to ease the transition from fossil-fuels to other sources of energy.

7. Conservation: Conservation measures should include:

(a) "Lifeline" pricing—a relatively low, flat rate for the first several hundred kilowatt hours of electricity consumed by residential users with higher prices thereafter including penalty rates for nonessential commercial uses.

(b) Research in "load-leveling" techniques to even out demand for electricity throughout the day, and means of maximizing efficiency of present electrical generating capacity and minimizing need for expansion, e.g., "peak load" pricing.

(c) Development of a national "best-interest-use" policy as a guide to setting priorities for use of electricity by government and industry.

(d) Revitalization of railroads, which are one of the most energy efficient means of transportation. If railroads fail to serve rural people they should be federalized.

(e) Federal funds specifically appropriated for public transit systems in rural areas. Funds for public transit should be incorporated in every social service program.

(f) More grant money for winterizing homes through Farmers Home Administration and Community Services Administration.

(g) Measures to insure that fuel costs do not continue to increase for the poor. Aside from sharing in the universal need for fuel and heat, cooking, hot water, etc., rural people are extremely dependent for their welfare and livelihoods on fuel for transportation, and their particular energy needs should be addressed in any comprehensive energy program, e.g., by providing fuel stamps for migrant farmworkers and others whose income will not cover the cost of transportation to work.

(h) Penalties for waste—every federal agency should be required to exercise its authority to further conservation. For example, HUD and FmHA should immediately cease financing energy wasteful housing—old or new.

8. Development of Alternative Energy Sources: The Federal government should actively promote solar and other alternative sources of energy. A solar research and development program, including grants to states and localities, should be funded on a par with nuclear research and development. Any Federal incentives to fossil fuel producers should be matched by incentives to developers of solar energy.

Family farmers should be provided financial assistance and credit incentives to meet their on-farm energy needs through use of solar-powered space and water heaters and crop dryers; utilization of wind power equipment, and conversion of energy in biomass,¹ organic wastes and energy crops to methane, glucose fuel and ethanol alcohol. They should be encouraged to set aside acreage to grow the organic matter needed for conversion to methane or ethanol alcohol and to substitute

¹ Biomass conversion is the process of utilizing solar energy captured by photosynthesis and stored in plants (from algae to wood) and in urban, industrial and animal wastes.

organic materials such as animal manures and sewage sludge for energy-intensive commercial fertilizers.

A Federally-funded research and development small grant and loan program should be made available to individuals and local nonprofit organizations to encourage and develop agricultural use of alternative energy.



rural economic development

"The Congress finds that the rapid growth of urban population and uneven expansion of urban development in the United States, together with a decline in farm population, slower growth in rural areas, and migration to the cities, has created an imbalance . . . and that the economic and social development of the Nation, the proper conservation of our natural resources, and the achievement of satisfactory living standards depend upon the sound, orderly, and more balanced development of all areas of the Nation."

—HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1970

"The Congress commits itself to a sound balance between rural and urban America. The Congress considers this balance so essential to the peace, prosperity and welfare of all our citizens that the highest priority must be given to the revitalization and development of rural areas."

—AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1970

Despite a rhetorical commitment to "balanced growth" our national policy has been implicit rather than explicit and it has been one of discrimination against the people of small towns and rural areas. Meanwhile, the preference of a majority of Americans for smaller communities is now being reflected in a decrease of the decades-long out-migration from nonmetropolitan areas and a slowing down of growth in metropolitan areas.

Economic development of areas of high unemployment has been the express purpose of an impressive roster of government programs. In nearly every case it has been narrowly perceived as the promotion of private business enterprises which will create jobs. This focus has led to the growing acceptance in government circles of a "triage" scheme of priorities, based on an irrational three-way classification of rural communities: (1) those which will survive regardless of support, (2) those which will not survive no matter how much money (for private industry) is pumped in, and (3) those which can grow with public help, known in political parlance as "growth centers." The very term, "growth centers" is prophetic of their favorable treatment by the Federal government, which increasingly chooses to stake the welfare of rural people on the assumption that "growth center" benefits will "trickle down."

(In its more simplified state, the "growth center" concept is an illegitimate cousin of "metropollanna." It is business oriented—not people oriented. If a new hospital is needed, it should be put where it is needed—not located as part of a pseudo grand design for creating a little Chicago.)

The problems with this point of view are:

- (1) There is little or no evidence to support the "trickle down" theory.
- (2) Private industries which locate in poverty areas are generally seeking cheap labor, thus perpetuating existing problems through low wages.
- (3) Industries which require high-skilled labor generally import their own from other areas, rather than instituting training programs.
- (4) No government agency is qualified or should be given the right to determine which communities shall live.
- (5) It supports private, profit-making industries over cooperatives,



Alex Mercure

Aaron Henry

nonprofit enterprises, and particularly public services which often hold promise of jobs, income and growth.

(6) It largely excludes health, education, housing and other economic needs from its concept of "development."

(7) It has seldom required that the communities affected decide what "economic development" they desire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Commission on Balanced Growth: The need is for a temporary agency, independent of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Agriculture, charged with the task of documenting the preferences of the American people in terms of the nature, scale and quality of the community in which they want to live. This agency should report to the President and Congress its recommendations for national programs and policies which will facilitate the development of such communities. The economic system should serve the community, not the reverse. The yardstick applied to growth policies should be the degree to which they afford freedom of opportunity and access and end discrimination by race, sex, age and place.

2. Equity in Federal and State Programs: The most important thing that can be done for non-metro people in the U.S. is to give them equity in all Federal and State programs as they presently exist, and as they hopefully improve. Equity in these programs will do more to improve the quality of life for rural people, provide more jobs, create more opportunity, slow down outmigration, and improve health than any other means being offered. It may be true that the cities will continue to grow, and some rural areas and small towns decline, but the expenditures by State and Federal governments should not continue to be weighted in favor of the growth of megalopolis.

3. Full Employment: Most new non-public jobs are created by the great corporations which dominate our economic life. Under the present scheme of things, there is little government can do to influence their decisions except to maintain a level of full employment so that the unemployed, (those denied a place in American life), do not pile up either in the cities or the rural areas.

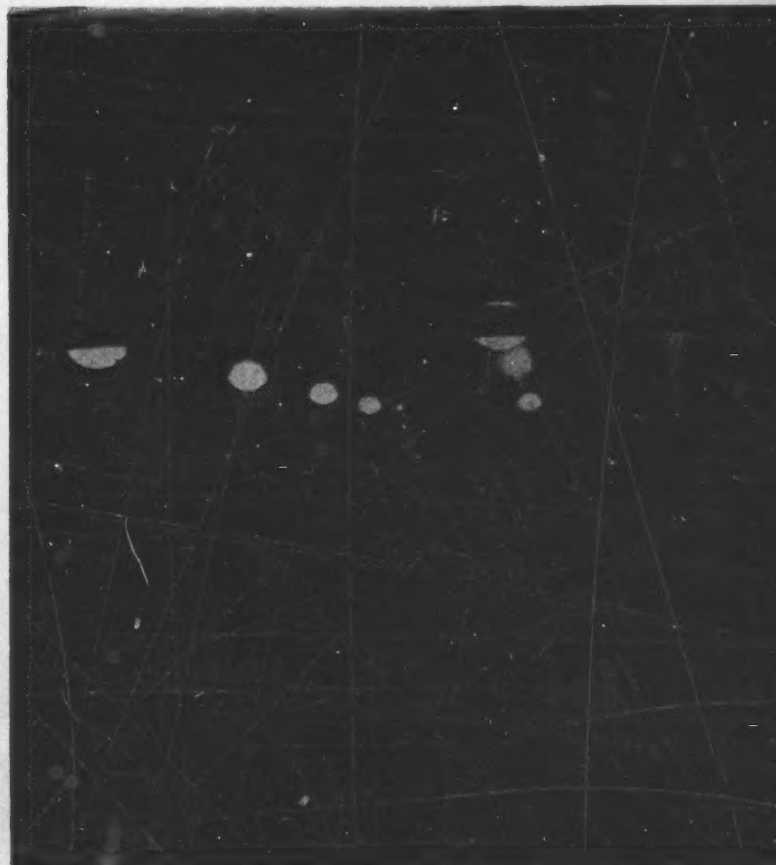
Full employment requires the creation of publicly financed jobs which can help in providing many needed services in rural areas.

4. Not Every Town Can Be Industrial: "Rural areas" are not identical. They vary from prosperous farming economies based on rich land to tragically poor colonial areas, dominated by exploitative absentee owners. Obviously the basic problems of the resident population call for varying solutions. Not every town may want, need, or be able to sustain

an industrial park. Agriculture is a legitimate form of economic development. When the government provides transportation, health care, education, community development, housing, etc., it will not only create jobs; it will affirm the rights of people to benefit from basic Federal programs regardless of where they live. We can no longer afford to make a discriminatory distinction between "private" and "public service" employment, such as multiplier effects and all the other benefits traditionally attributed to the "production of goods" economy. Labor-intensive producer cooperatives have produced high yields and environmental advantages. The Federal government should support them with low-interest long-term credit, grants, and assistance in creating alternative marketing mechanisms.

5. Planning, Coordination and Cooperation Must Be Democratically Controlled: The tendency to erect one level of governmental structure after another on top of local government, particularly structures dominated by non-elected officials must stop. Community controlled corporations, such as Community Development Corporations, can be effective agents of change by creating employment opportunities and services responsive to local needs. These and other grass-roots self-help efforts should be federally supported with credit and technical assistance.

6. Government Procurement: The federal government should plan its purchasing of goods and services in such a way as to give long term support for the economic development of depressed rural areas. In fixing its procurement policies the federal government should include consideration of the total costs and benefits to the public sector, including reduced social welfare costs that result from job creation.



rural public transportation

America's superhighways and rusted railways are both symptoms of a national policy that has enshrined the automobile and its offspring, megalopolis, at the expense of the people, particularly those in rural areas and small towns.

It has always been one of the foremost duties of a government to promote good transportation facilities at reasonable cost. In this country, for example, we gave away an empire of land to subsidize the railroad system, and we have expended the fruits of another on the vast superhighway system that has done much to destroy the original investment.

Although attention has frequently been focused on transportation for farm and other products produced in rural areas, little attention has been given to public transportation for rural people.

The evidence suggests the situation is bad and getting worse. In 1975-76, there were 20,000 towns with under 50,000 people. Of these, only 318 had bus systems. In the last 15 years, 146 bus systems have disappeared, most of them in towns of under 25,000. West Virginia, for instance, now loses an average of three bus companies a year.

As these figures indicate, most rural residents must rely heavily on the automobile. However, according to Census data one-third of the poor families in nonmetropolitan areas own no vehicle, and 47% of the rural elderly are not even licensed to drive. To this group are added another 20 million rural dwellers to whom the family automobile is unavailable during a substantial portion of the day.

To make matters worse, the massive increase in highway construction in recent years has tended to undermine the economies of rural areas. Buses and trucks now speed down superhighways, along routes where no one lives, by-passing even the small towns. Truck transportation, encouraged by highway construction, has resulted in demands for further curtailing railroad service.

At the Federal level, the neglect of transportation needs of rural Americans has been nearly total. Almost since its inception, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has sought to escape from any responsibility for rural public transit. Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has the authority to reach into communities to improve transportation, it was agreed that HUD would abdicate these responsibilities to DOT. But when OEO sought DOT's assistance on rural transportation, the General Counsel ruled that DOT would provide such assistance only through its Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA), although at that time UMTA was limited to metropolitan areas.

In 1973, Section 147 of the Federal Aid Highway Act authorized funds to carry out demonstration projects for public transportation in rural areas. After much bureaucratic wrangling within DOT over control of the program, and the expansion of the Act to include "small urban areas," the first grants were finally made in late 1975. Of the \$75 million that was authorized, however, only a third has ever been spent, and only 90 of the 600 communities that sought grants received funds. In addition, the 147 grant recipients may use only 30 percent of their funds for operating expenses. Unless this legislation is amended to allow them to use a greater portion of their grants for operating their buses, many

of these systems will not survive. In any case, all 147 projects will expire by 1979.

In the only other effort by DOT to aid rural people, the National Mass Transportation Act of 1974 provided \$500 million for transit in rural areas. Although this provision was called the Act's rural assistance program, thus far none of the money has actually been spent. Potential recipients of these funds would be able to use them only for the purchase of equipment, not for operating expenses. This particular restriction applies only to rural areas.

Other Federal transit projects, scattered among numerous government agencies, are exclusive in terms of who they serve, and are often duplicative in those areas where they exist at all. These programs are supplemented by the efforts of private groups, local agencies serving the aged and disabled, and some promising state activities, notably in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but the vast majority of rural residents remain untouched by any of these efforts.

Public transportation for rural people today is about where rural electrification was in 1930 when a great demonstration by the Department of Agriculture, the power companies and the American Farm Bureau Federation proved conclusively, based on the most elaborate and nonsensical "evaluation" techniques at hand, that electrifying rural America was economically unfeasible.

DOT authorized one study of rural passenger transportation needs which turned into a study of whether small towns are really necessary.

Transportation Secretary Brock Adams has set a hopeful tone for the new Administration in promising, "We are now moving to bring rural needs to the forefront." He has actively sought cooperation from other Federal agencies to coordinate rural public transit activities at the national level. Whether or not these efforts will bear fruit for the stranded rural resident remains to be seen.



Steve Bossi

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rural Transportation Task Force: Given the conflicting Federal policies, we call for a Presidentially appointed task force on rural transportation problems. This task force would be charged with recommending modification of existing rules, regulations, and guidelines which encourage costly, inefficient and duplicative practices. This task force should recommend, for early enactment, legislation that would give non-urbanized areas the same right to use project funds for operating expenditures as do urban projects.

2. Public Transportation Demonstration: Public transportation systems in rural areas not only benefit the users; they also promote the economic stability of rural communities. We urge the renewal of programs like the Section 147 Rural Demonstration program, which ended with less than a third of the funds allocated. Responsibility for these programs must be placed in a single state agency. The actual implementation should be left up to the local communities.

3. Amend National Mass Transit Act: We urge change by law in current Department of Transportation interpretations of the National Mass Transportation Act of 1974 which eliminates 700-900 rural counties from eligibility for assistance on the grounds that they do not contain a place of 2,500 or more people. This act should also be amended to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to waive the labor requirements contained in Section 13(c).

4. Operating Funds Needed: Funds for operating expenses provide the backbone for any rural transportation system. Where funds are now

authorized for only capital expenditures in nonurban transportation systems, we urge that the funds be authorized for operating subsidies as well. Where funds are presently authorized for both operating and capital expenses, we further urge that a greater portion of the funds be designated for operating expenses.

5. Rural Transportation Agency: The Congress should establish an independent Rural Transportation Administration, comparable in many respects to the Rural Electrification Administration, authorized to provide subsidies, low interest loans for capital facilities, technical assistance to public and private bodies. The Congress should stipulate that this agency is responsible for carrying out the provisions of a program comparable to those called for in a resolution passed by the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, modified to apply to all rural people. No funds, loan or grant, should go to any agency which does not in fact permit consumer participation in policy and planning. All contracts for funds should specify area coverage, to preclude skimming of nonmetro areas where density and income are most favorable. (The following recommendations, "a" through "e" are modeled after the White House Conference resolution.)

"a) The Federal government shall immediately adopt a policy of increasing transportation services for rural people. The policy should be flexible encompassing various alternatives. Both system subsidies and payments to individuals may be needed, the choice depending upon the availability and usability of public and private transportation.

"Subsidies should be made available not only for existing systems, but also for the development of flexible and innovative systems, especially where there are no existing facilities.

"b) The Federal government shall act immediately to increase support for the development of transportation for all users, with special consideration given to the needs of the elderly, the handicapped, rural people, the poor, youth, farmworkers, and Indians. These groups should be consulted in the development of specialized services. These services should be planned concurrently and parallel with general public transportation planning.

"c) Publicly funded programs for (rural) people shall be designed so that transportation will be required as an integral part of these programs, whether transportation is provided directly by the program or through other community services.

"Public policy shall require coordination of existing transportation and/or new planned transportation with publicly funded programs for (rural) people.

"d) The Federal government should move immediately to adopt a policy which will both increase the level of funding available to the development and improvement of transportation services and also foster the coordination of all forms of transportation, public and private, at Federal, state, regional, and local levels of responsibility. The Congress of the United States is urged to immediately adopt legislation to convert the Highway Trust Fund into a General Transportation Fund to be utilized for all modes of transportation.

"A portion of the General Transportation Fund shall be made available for the development of new transportation services and the improvement of existing transportation services for rural people.

"e) A broad program to develop people-delivery systems in rural areas should be undertaken by the Federal and state governments, based on demonstration projects such as those conducted by the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Appalachian Regional Commission, Green Light, and others.

"Legislation should be passed enabling and requiring public, social, health, and employment services in rural areas to help provide transportation and outreach; removing legal barriers such as taxi rates and car, taxi, and school bus insurance restrictions to such transportation services; and financing such services for people in rural areas."

6. Rural Transportation Advocacy Agency: The CSA, HEW, DOT, USDA, DOL, and private foundations should pool grant funds for the



Nancy Neuman

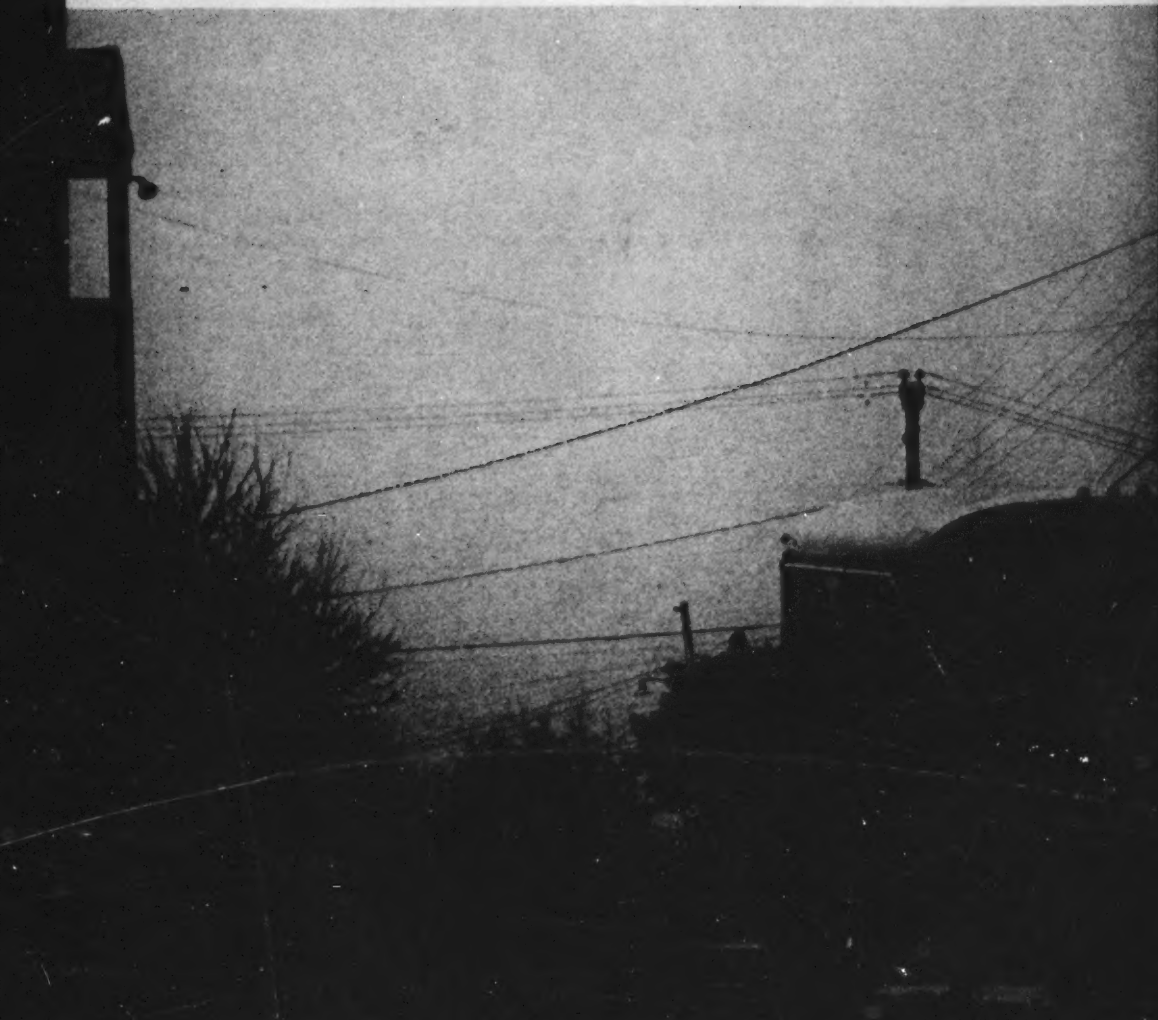
support of a nonprofit organization to play the role of researcher, organizer, publicist, ombudsman advocate, and clearinghouse for human transportation in rural areas with a role in that field comparable to that played by the Rural Housing Alliance in housing and community facilities.

7. *Paucity of Data:* The paucity of data on rural people's transportation need and response must be overcome. No rational policy can be developed in the absence of more information.

8. *Presidential Coordination:* The President should issue instructions to all agencies to establish formal lines of communication and guidelines for support and coordination on rural human transportation.

9. *Consumer Participation:* Careful safeguards must be built into any transportation program to assure consumer participation and to make certain that in the absence of diligent Federal, state and local efforts, needy people are not abandoned.

10. *Model State Act:* The various state transportation acts should be researched to produce a model state rural transportation act to help the state legislatures.



SECTION 13

rural justice and legal assistance

"There are more lawyers serving the poor in the city of New York than all of the South put together" — Dan Bradley, Office of Legal Services, CSA

Justice depends on a chain of beliefs, acts, and cultural institutions including laws based on fundamental fairness, the enforcement of these laws by well-trained and fairly motivated police forces and judges, access to skillful advocates who operate in the public interest, and a "correction system" which will assist, not destroy, the individual who is deprived of his freedom. The quality of justice is determined by the weakest of the links in this chain.

SUPPLY OF LAWYERS

Urban areas have far more lawyers per person than rural areas. In 1971, places with population in excess of 500,000 had one lawyer per 223 persons; in places of 250,000-500,000, there was one lawyer per 254 persons; in places of less than 250,000 population, there was one lawyer per 936 persons — one-fourth as many as in the large cities.

The scarcity of lawyers in rural areas adversely affects the quality of the administration of justice, law enforcement and defense in criminal actions. Moreover, it effectively precludes representation in many civil cases, especially those involving the poor as plaintiffs and those, commonly called law reform cases, which tend to upset the status quo. Most rural people do not have access to the legal assistance required to effect social change and increase their power to protect and control their own lives.

The paucity of lawyers in small towns and rural areas results, in part, from the inability of the population to support them, either by individual payment or by payment through publicly supported institutions. Moreover, most of the lawyers hesitate to challenge traditional institutions and decision-makers because controversial action in a small town or rural area usually has quick and unpleasant personal consequences.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN RURAL AREAS

Many rural judges are "lay judges", i.e., they have little training in the basic concepts of due process and other constitutional guarantees. Many earn a part or all of their salary from fines imposed upon the accused. This creates a clear conflict of interest.

Many rural judges are only part-time judges, engaging in active law practice when they are not sitting on the bench. Associated institutions such as bail bondsmen or bail agencies are often absent in rural areas, as are diagnostic centers, half-way houses, therapeutic services and all of the panoply of contemporary rehabilitation services widely accepted in metropolitan centers.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Rural police forces often consist of elected county sheriffs and their appointed deputies. The sheriff is usually a politician first and a lay

enforcement officer second. He and his deputies often lack the training and skills necessary for fair and unbiased law enforcement. Information regarding the procedural rights of the criminally accused is often never transmitted by these officers.

Evidence of recent efforts to improve law enforcement efforts in rural areas is not encouraging. These efforts are carried out generally with Law Enforcement Assistance Act funds — a revenue sharing scheme for the upgrading of police forces and the criminal justice system in the U.S. LEAA funds are used to increase personnel (not necessarily trained), buy equipment such as guns and similar crime fighting apparatus (Alice's Restaurant really happened) and establish detective units to track down marijuana users.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

There is a constitutional right to adequate legal counsel at every stage of the judicial process for one accused of a crime, and each State has an obligation to provide that counsel when a person is unable to pay. Studies reveal that over one-half of all rural counties are financially incapable of meeting this obligation. As a result in rural areas many low-income persons accused of crimes are denied their right to adequate representation. In the absence of public defender agencies, they are often assigned untrained, inexperienced, and part-time counsel. If a public defender is located, he is often a private attorney chosen because he submitted the lowest bid for his services.

CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

While there is no constitutional right to a lawyer in civil matters, people often need legal advice and assistance to defend legitimate rights like protection from government interference, access to the benefits of social legislation, and fair treatment in consumer and environmental matters.

In rural areas those basic rights are often denied simply because there are not sufficient lawyers willing and able to take such cases. For the poor in rural areas the problem is intensified by the fact that any legal assistance they could obtain must necessarily come from the inadequate supply of government-supported attorneys.

Legal assistance for the poor in the late sixties was delivered primarily through the Office of Economic Opportunity's Office of Legal Services. Although under a Congressional mandate to provide equitable funding between urban and rural people, Legal Services devoted less than nine percent of its budget to rural programs. The result was that throughout the South there was only one Legal Services lawyer for every 2,000 poor persons; in Kentucky that ratio was 1 for 20,000!

The Legal Services Corporation, which replaced the Office of Legal Services, has nothing in its authorizing legislation which assures more equitable funding for rural people. There has been some effort to correct the past inequity in rural/urban allocation of LSC funds. In 1977, LSC spent 36% of its operating program fund in predominantly rural states. This proportion does not reflect actual services dispensed. Many legal services officers, while charged with representing a combined urban and rural client community, tend to assist the more accessible and "rights conscious" urban poor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increased Funding for Legal Services: Much larger amounts of Federal funds must be made available to provide free legal services for the poor, both for criminal defense and civil matters. If those eligible and in need are to be served, the Legal Services Corporation needs nearly ten times the amount appropriated in recent years.



Richard Margolis

The Legal Services Corporation must stop discriminating against rural people. Rural legal services offices must be given sufficient funds to provide coverage for all rural areas within the program's jurisdiction, and to cover the higher per capita costs of serving more dispersed rural clients.

2. Delivery of Legal Services: Federal dollars for the delivery of legal services, both criminal and civil, should go only to programs organized as community-based legal services offices, equipped with sufficient outreach personnel. Experiments in funding fee-for-service attorneys (popularly called the *judicare* model) have proven ineffective both from a quality and an economic standpoint. It is obvious to even the most casual observer that legal insurance, vouchers, money orders and even hard cash cannot buy quality legal assistance if the lawyers are not there.

3. Reform the LEAA: The manner in which Federal dollars under the Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) are granted to the States, and the purposes to which they are put, must be altered. A fair share of those dollars must go into rural jurisdictions to improve the quality of law enforcement, judicial process and correction. Hardware, especially weaponry, should not be purchased with Federal funds. Indeed, the goal ought to be the disarmament of police as well as criminals. Funds for rural area police forces should not go for riot and crowd control measures, but be used to provide adequate communication systems and training to insure that recent court decisions relating to personal rights are disseminated and implemented. Funds should be used to upgrade the quality of rural courts and detention centers and for training rural judges, justices of the peace and jailers. Good, action-oriented research should be conducted to develop methods of streamlining and upgrading rural court systems. More of these funds must be used to provide quality public defense for indigent defendants.

4. Reform Legal Education: The legal education system needs radical change ranging from reorientation of curricula to more equitable admissions policies. The emphasis should be less on developing an elite corps of manipulators and more on producing a broadly representative group of persons intent on and capable of producing equal justice. Law schools should revise their curricula to address specific rural issues and practices as well as to train attorneys to work with and utilize paralegal assistants. Attempts must be made to recruit and retain students from rural areas who are likely to return and serve their community and not just those who have money.



the rural aging

More than one-third of the nation's elderly live in rural areas. For the rural elderly, the problems of poverty, isolation, poor health, inadequate housing and lack of transportation are compounded. Most of the rural elderly are dependent on Social Security or welfare payments as the main source of income. Transportation to services — even when services are available — is often nonexistent or prohibitively expensive. Federal programs often ignore the special circumstances of the rural elderly, including requirements and restrictions which prevent them from benefiting from programs. Agency advisory and review committees are almost totally urban in make-up and this bias is richly reflected in the allocation of funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Income:* Income guarantees under Social Security and SSI must be raised to provide a level of income which at least meets the government's own poverty definition. Cost of living increases should not result in decreases in other benefits such as veterans' pensions, public housing rents, food stamp bonuses, or Medicare services.
2. *Transportation:* The 16(b)(2) program under the Urban Mass Transportation Administration is underfunded. In addition to an increase in appropriations, the program must be expanded to permit use of grant funds for operating expenses.
3. *Matching Funds:* Programs such as Title XX require that local units of government supply matching funds in order to participate, discriminating against the elderly who live in poverty areas. These requirements must be eased for areas which cannot match the Federal dollars.
4. *Jobs:* The Federal government should provide public service jobs aimed at providing services for the elderly; these jobs should give preference to the elderly in hiring. Monies should be made available for community employment programs to train elderly people to work in rural areas, to educate them to develop housing, and to train the rural elderly for jobs in accord with their capacity.

Currently Title IX of the Older Americans Act reaches less than 1% of those people eligible. Congress should double the amount of money available for this program.

The Green Thumb program continues to be the only program providing special employment services to the rural elderly and we commend their efforts.

5. *Health:* The Medicare program should be amended to reflect the special requirements of the rural elderly. At present, rural Americans pay the same premium for Medicare as their urban and suburban counterparts — despite the fact that the lack of local health facilities and personnel often means they get less service for their premium. A general up-grading of rural health care programs must be accompanied by expansion of Medicare to permit reimbursement of rural physicians and providers at levels equal to that of metropolitan health professionals. Medicare covers less than one-half of the health care costs of the elderly: until such time as a decent national health care program can be enacted

for everyone — including the elderly — the law must be amended to permit more comprehensive coverage and a similar range of services in both rural and urban areas. Monies should be provided to strengthen medical outreach programs.

6. Older Americans Act: Titles III and VII of the Older Americans Act should provide more money to rural states and have flexible programs that can meet rural needs.

7. Legal Services: Legal representation, counseling and education should be available to assist the rural elderly in securing benefits from the legal, administrative and financing institutions charged with meeting these needs. The training, financing and supervision of paraprofessional personnel to work in rural communities towards this end should be supported by government programs.

8. Property Taxes: States should find ways to give relief from high property taxes for senior citizens.

9. Research and Rural Advocacy: We charge the Administration on Aging with neglect and discrimination against the rural elderly and insist that the agency fund rural oriented groups as they do urban oriented agencies. Congress should earmark AoA model project and training funds for rural areas to ensure the development and delivery of services in a way which is congenial to rural people, and that agency's advisory and review committees must include representation of small town and rural people.



rural women



Graciela Olivarez

Historically, rural women have played a central role in the economic well-being of the family and the productivity of the agricultural economy. Women have worked the crops, harvested, driven tractors, tended livestock, kept the books, raised poultry, and even taken on migratory and seasonal farmwork or extra jobs in town to supplement meager income. Rural women whose families have been forced off the land have often become principal wage earners in areas where little or no work was available for their husbands.

There are 34 million women in rural America. Working on the farm, in schools and factories, or at home, women have in common the double plight of discrimination based on sex and invisibility conferred by place of residence. Confronting a battery of problems, they have few resources and almost no government programs to assist them.

Today, 46% of all women work for wages, earning incomes that are only 57% of male workers'. Thirteen percent of all households are headed by women, but this figure does not give an accurate picture of the number of people who are dependent on the earnings of women: the Census Bureau classifies households as "Headed by Males" if a husband is present — regardless of whether or not he works.

A lifetime of wage discrimination haunts women in old age. Although a majority of Social Security recipients are female, women received only 67% of the benefits received by men.

The only available data on the income status of non-metropolitan women was provided in 1970 when the median earnings for non-metro women were fifty percent below non-metro men, and \$800 a year below metropolitan women. Almost 44% of all non-metro poor families were headed by females. Black women in non-metro areas earn 42% less than their white counterparts, and 68% of the rural households headed by Black women were poor.

In order to obtain adequate income, rural women must have decent jobs. This requires educational and job training opportunities which allow them to move beyond low paying, sexually stereotyped positions where employed women are concentrated. Since most working women have child-rearing responsibilities, they must be provided quality day care services offering pre-school and after-school care for children. Subsidized child care is virtually non-existent in rural America.

Despite the lower income and higher unemployment rates for women, Federal programs aimed at improving employment potential or providing jobs have primarily benefitted men. In 1976, only about one third of the participants in the two major job creation programs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act were women. The only employment and training program which had substantial participation by women in 1976 was the Work Incentive Program (WIN), which is for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

The problems of rural women are compounded by sex discrimination which is sanctioned by, or even written into the law. For example, women suffer under the Social Security system because benefits are based on past earnings, but, worse still, women who have worked outside the home for a limited time or for lower wages are not allowed to draw upon the contributions made by their husbands, as can women who have never worked.



Harriet Barlow

Federal inheritance taxes treat the labor of farm women as a "donation" rather than an equal contribution to the running of the farm. If the husband dies first, a farm woman must pay taxes on the full value of the estate (minus a standard deduction) since it is treated as a gift to her — even if the farm is jointly held and she has spent her entire life working on it. If she dies first, he pays no taxes. Many rural women are forced to sell off their farms in order to pay inheritance taxes and are thereby stripped of the means of making a living.

Rural women are also penalized by the legal system's failure to provide economic safeguards in divorce decrees that result in lenient enforcement of child-support and alimony payments. Divorced women are awarded child-support in 44% of the cases (and alimony in only 14% of the cases), but only 45% of the child-support payments are received on a regular basis.

The efforts of rural women to obtain equal justice are severely handicapped by the lack of adequate research and statistical data describing their conditions and problems in a rural context. There has been no Federally sponsored effort to gauge the effect on women of Federal programs targeted for rural areas. Social service agencies have little or no data on the educational and social needs of rural women, their use of available services, their evaluation of service effectiveness, their suggestions for improvement.

There are many other concerns of rural women, including health care and equal access to education. Rural America's Working Committee on Rural Women, launched in 1978, will take a look at the broad range of issues relating to rural women and will develop policy recommendations to redress past injustices. Until their report is completed, the membership has endorsed as interim recommendations the "Amended Resolution on Rural Women" which was adopted as part of the Plan of Action by delegates to the National Women's Conference held in Houston, Texas in 1977.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *The President and Congress should establish a Federal rural education policy designed to meet the special problems of isolation, poverty and underemployment that characterizes much of rural America. Such a policy must be consciously planned to overcome the inequality of opportunities available to rural women and girls.*
2. *The Office of Management and Budget should set and enforce a policy that data collected on beneficiaries of all Federal programs shall be reported by sex, by minority status, and by urban/rural or metropolitan/non-metropolitan areas, based on a standard definition.*
3. *Data on employment of women and public programs on behalf of working women should include in their definition farm wives and widows who perform the many tasks essential to the farm operation.*
4. *A farm wife should have the same ownership rights as her spouse under the state inheritance and Federal estate laws. Tax laws should recognize that the labor of a farm wife gives her an equitable interest in the property.*
5. *All programs developed on behalf of rural women should be certain to include Black, migrant, Native American, Alaskan, Asian, and Hispanic, and all isolated minorities, and affirmative action programs should be extended to include all disenfranchised groups.*
6. *The President should appoint a joint committee from the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Justice to investigate the Louisiana sugar plantation system's violations of human rights, especially of women. This commission should also investigate conditions of other seasonal and migratory workers in all states and territories of the United States.*

special recommendations

RURAL YOUTH

Rural youth are a vital segment of rural America with their own special problems, concerns and needs. The problems of rural youth including the rising rate of crime, delinquency, youth abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, inappropriate and inferior education, lack of recreational facilities and unequal job opportunities must be highlighted. Human growth and cultural development must be encouraged for rural youth in all aspects of their lives including recreation, employment, training and education.

A working committee should be established to investigate and seek solutions to the problems of rural youth in order to assure the comprehensive attention it demands.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY AND MINORITY FARMERS

We commend the Office of Minority Business Enterprise for initiatives fostering rural economic development opportunities that could reach and benefit disadvantaged minority farmers/landowners.

Jeff Faux



involved in the conference

CO-SPONSORS

Adams Electric Cooperative, Inc.
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Basin Electric Power Cooperative
Center for Community Change
Colorado Housing Finance Agency
Colorado Rural Housing Development Corporation
Community Nutrition Institute
Delta Housing Development Corporation
Homes/Casas, Inc.
Human Economic Appalachian Development
Industrial Union Department—AFL-CIO
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement
Workers of America—UAW
KEM Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Kentucky Mountain Housing Development Corporation
Laborers' International Union of North America
Marion County Housing Authority
Minnesota Migrant Council
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Center for Appropriate Technology
National Farmers Union
National Housing Law Project
National Rural Center
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
New England Non-Profit Housing Development Corporation
Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
Program Funding, Inc.
Self-Help Enterprises, Inc.
Southern Mutual Help Association
Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation
Valle del Sol



Leon Keyserling

PERSONS ON THE PROGRAM

Arrendondo, Rudy. Rural America, Washington, DC.
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AuCoin, Les. U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Ball, Dan. Farmers Home Administration, Washington, DC.
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Belandier, Jerome. Countryside Magazine, Waterloo, WI.
Belden, Joe. Exploratory Project for Economic Alternatives, Washington, DC.
Bell, Mary. Department of Energy, Washington, DC.
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Blackwelder, Brent. American Rivers Conservation Council, Washington, DC.
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Bode, Barbara. Children's Foundation, Washington, DC.
Bossi, Steve. National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, IA.
Bothwell, Robert. National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy,
Washington, DC.
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Brown, Philip. Rural America, Washington, DC.
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 Cochran, Clay. Rural America, Washington, DC.
 Cohen, Leonard. National Association of Counties, Washington, DC.
 Cohn, Nancy. Washington, DC.
 Conrad, Charles. Consumer Coalition for Health, Washington, DC.
 Cruz, Jesse. National Land for People, Fresno, CA.
 Cunnion, Donald. Organic Gardening and Farming Magazine, Emmaus, PA.
 Daniels, Henry. Takoma Park, MD.
 DeMarco, Susan. Austin, TX.
 Demmel, Dennis. Small Farm Research Project, Hartington, NB.
 Dolbeare, Cushing. Low-Income Housing Coalition, Washington, DC.
 Dooley, John. Vermont Legal Aid, Burlington, VT.
 Dow, William. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.
 Dyer, N. Allen. Southern W. Va. Regional Health Council, Bluefield, WV.
 Ebona, Andrew. United Indian Planners Association, Washington, DC.
 Elam, Jon. City Manager, Walnut Grove, MN.
 Engel, David. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC.
 Evans, Faith. Children's Foundation, Washington, DC.
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 Faux, Jeff. Exploratory Project for Economic Alternatives, Gardiner, ME.
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